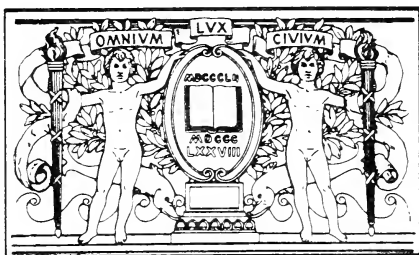




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THE  
BELGIC REVOLUTION

OF  
1830.

1793-1861.  
BY CHARLES WHITE, Esq.

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“The surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire.”—BACON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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LONDON:  
WHITTAKER AND CO., AVE-MARIA LANE.  
1835.

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THE

# BELGIC REVOLUTION.

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## CHAPTER I.

DEMORALIZATION OF THE ARMY—THE FORTRESSES SURRENDER—STRENGTH OF THE NETHERLANDS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT—OSTEND ABANDONED—ASPECT OF BRUSSELS AFTER COMBAT—THE BELGIAN PARISIAN LEGION—THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHES ITS AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY—DE POTTER RECALLED—HIS TRIUMPHANT RETURN AND FALL—CHARACTERS OF MESSRS. JOLLY AND ROGIER—CONDUCT OF THE BELGIAN DEPUTIES AT THE HAGUE—CONSOLIDATION OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT—THE COMMISSION APPOINTED TO DRAW UP THE CONSTITUTION DECIDES, AS A PRELIMINARY MEASURE, ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MONARCHY—VAN HALEN ARRESTED—POSITION OF THE DUTCH AND PATRIOT FORCES—THE LATTER ADVANCE, AND FORCE THE FORMER TO RETREAT BEHIND THE RUPEL.

THE demoralization produced on the whole of the Netherlands forces by the repulse of Prince Frederick, was rapid beyond all parallel or anticipation. Wherever the troops did not abandon their officers, the populace, after a short struggle, invariably gained the ascendancy. The generals withdrew to the citadels, where, being without provisions or stores, and having no confidence in those under their orders, they were shortly constrained to capitulate, and were either retained prisoners, or conducted to the Dutch outposts. Ath, where the populace had risen, was taken possession of by Baron Van der Smissen, in the name of the provisional government, on the 27th; and thus an immense supply of

cannon, powder, and military stores fell into the hands of the patriots. In a few days, Mons, Charleroy, Tournay, and Ostend, the citadels of Namur, Liege, Ghent, Menin and Ypres, with Courtray, Bruges, Philippeville, Audenarde, &c., and the rich contents of their arsenals, shared a similar fate ; so that, in less than three weeks, the whole line of barrier fortresses, with the exception of Antwerp and Maestricht, were at the disposal of the insurgents.

Defection became rife throughout all ranks, and extended even to the higher grades. In order to encourage this, the provisional government issued an edict releasing all officers from their oaths to the king, and rewarding with immediate advancement those that embraced the national cause. Major-generals Goethals, Wauthier, and Daine were amongst the first that availed themselves of this absolution ; and so rapidly did the contagion spread, that ere ten days, the Dutch officers commanding corps found that they could place no reliance whatever, either on the Belgians or on their own countrymen. For, whilst the one only waited a convenient occasion to desert, the other, who were in the minority, were in constant expectation of being abandoned, or perhaps attacked, by their own comrades. This, in a great measure, accounts for the extraordinary successes gained by the patriots over the Duke of Saxe Weimar and General Cort-Heyligers : the first, after a succession of trifling skirmishes, being driven back upon Antwerp ; and the latter, who had 8000 men and 24 field-pieces under his orders, being compelled to seek a junction with Prince Frederick by the circuitous route of Wavre, Jodoigne, and thence to Terveuren and Cortenberg, after being repulsed at Oreye, Louvain, and Tirlemont. A singular manœuvre, seeing that the country by Diest and Gheel was open to him, and that he might thus have immediately

united with the main body, which, for the moment, held its position on the left bank of the Rupel and two Néthes, and ought to have taken every possible precaution to prevent its left flank from being turned by the patriots.

The dissolution of an army so numerous and well organized as that of the Netherlands, is an event of too great importance to be passed over in a cursory manner ; but the surprise naturally awakened by its sudden disorganization is much diminished in considering how deeply the seeds of discontent and disaffection were implanted throughout its ranks.\*

“ At the moment of the attack on Brussels, the Netherlands military establishment consisted of three battalions of grenadiers and two of Chasseurs (guards) ; eighteen regiments of infantry ; ten of cavalry (one of which, the seventh, was in Java) ; four battalions of field, six of garrison, and six troops of horse artillery ; a battalion of train ; a pontoon brigade ; two battalions of sappers and miners, and, finally, a squadron of gendarmes for each of the ten southern provinces, including the grand duchy.† The staff, under Lieut.-general Constant de Rebecque, was numerous, and on a par with the efficient state of the rest of the army, which formed a total of seventy-seven battalions of infantry ; seventy-two squadrons of cavalry, and sixty companies or troops of artillery, exclusive of train, sappers, and gendarmes ; giving a general total of about 90,000 men.

“ The whole, of which more than two-thirds were constantly on furlough without pay, was recruited by bal-

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\* The passages marked by inverted commas are extracted and revised from an article published in the *United Service Journal* (No. 50, Jan. 1833) by the author

† The employment of this species of armed police being contrary to the habits of the Dutch, was not introduced into Holland.

lot on a system of organization, resembling the Prussian landwehr, rather than the French conscription. All unmarried men, between the age of nineteen and twenty-three inclusive, were liable to be drawn ; a fifth of the whole was renewed annually. The term of service was for five years. The infantry regiments were enrolled by cantons or districts, and remained stationary in these districts or their immediate vicinity during many years. The major part had not, in fact, changed their quarters from their first formation in 1816 down to the summer of 1830. This plan was well adapted for convenience and economy, as regarded those classes of militia called out for annual training ; for had the Wallon regiments been quartered in Friesland, or the Gronigen divisions in Hainault, the time occupied in marching to and fro would have augmented the extraordinary expenditure and diminished the period of drill, which was limited by the 208th section of the fundamental law to about one month, except in cases of emergency, when the government could retain either a fourth or the whole of the militia under arms.

“ But this system was attended with many drawbacks. From remaining so many years in the same quarters, both officers and men became heavy, inert, and never acquired a smart or soldier-like appearance. They considered their garrisons as a home for life, and thus formed local attachments, which always tend to enervate discipline and enfeeble that military independence so essential to the mobility and efficiency of regular troops. The pernicious effects of this were sorely felt when the revolutionary crisis put the energy and fidelity of the troops to the test.

“ The garrisons of the various Belgic towns being thus recruited from the surrounding cantons, the men were connected by ties of parentage and early intercourse with the inhabitants and neighbouring peasantry. They had



relatives and friends amongst the people, from whom two-thirds were only separated during the brief period of annual exercise. They also spoke the provincial dialect, and were thus more easily persuaded that it would be a grievous crime towards God and their country to shed the blood of their fellow-citizens. Independent of the just discontent felt by all ranks at the obnoxious system of Dutch partiality, no arts, no arguments were left untried to inculcate the doctrine of revolt, either by the priests or revolutionary agents. Threats of excommunication and menaces of various kinds were employed to convert the loyal, whilst bribery and cajolery were unsparingly exerted to hurry the disaffected from their allegiance. Even the government and municipal funds were appropriated for the purposes of subornation: credit being subsequently given to the different functionaries for the sums thus disbursed.

“But, however active and well concerted these machinations, the result must be attributed rather to the nature of the military constitution and other local causes, than to the efforts of either clergy or provisional government. The militia, of whom two-thirds resided during eleven months with their families, fully participated in the general sentiment of hostility to the Dutch government. When ordered to join their battalions at the moment of the revolution, for the express purpose of combatting that revolution, their hearts were already embittered against those whom they were required to serve. The ordinary repugnance of the recruits for exercise was aggravated by their hatred to the cause for which they quitted their homes. In bidding adieu to these homes, they felt that, if they were to do their duty, they should probably be called on to immolate the objects of their affection at the command of foreign chiefs whom they detested, and for the support of a

government for which they entertained no sympathy. To expect that such men should suddenly forget all the ties that bound them to the people, and willingly take up arms to smite their own flesh and blood, was to expect too much of human nature: it was a premium and encouragement to desertion. Indeed, great numbers deemed it more simple to avoid the alternative, by not joining their regiments; preferring to risk the punishment inflicted on refractory conscripts, rather than to raise their weapons against their families, or to desert their colours when once enrolled.

“The rapidity with which the Belgic garrisons melted away exceeds all belief. A sketch of events at Ostend will suffice as a portrait of scenes that occurred elsewhere. At the moment the royal troops were expelled from Brussels, general excitement and disaffection were roused to the highest pitch in the Flanders; but Ghent and other towns had not hitherto broken out in open rebellion. Amongst those that still remained faithful was Ostend; here the garrison consisted of one battalion of the 6th and a few artillery-men. With these the veteran governor, Major-general Schepern, contrived to repress two or three partial risings, and held the disaffected in check during three days; for hitherto, the militia-men had evinced no overt inclination to abandon their colours, and on one occasion opened a platoon fire upon the rioters.

“Finding that his men were harassed by patrols and extra-duties, and feeling the importance of maintaining Ostend to the last moment, Schepern applied for reinforcements to Major-general Goethals, who occupied Bruges with about 1,800 men, where he also had to encounter popular tumults, and to go through the form of firing over the heads of the rioters. The indifference shown by the government to the conservation

of Ostend cannot easily be accounted for. Nothing but that fatality which attended all their operations, whether military or political, can account for their not having dispatched a chosen force from Flushing ; either to secure the fortress in the event of sedition, or to retake it after the defection of the troops. At any time, during many subsequent days, a handful of resolute men might have carried and maintained it with the greatest facility, especially if supported by two or three vessels of war off the coast, and as many gun-boats in the harbour. It is true Ostend was not in a state to stand a siege, the fraudulent conduct of a Dutch engineer having rendered it necessary to pull down and rebuild a great portion of the western defences ; but it was the evident policy of the king to make every sacrifice to preserve or retake a place that would have secured him the command of West Flanders, and thus have given a totally different turn to the aspect of affairs.

“ Goethals, whose position at Bruges had been extremely critical, abandoned that city on the 1st of October, and having arrived before the gates of Ostend with three battalions, was joyfully admitted by the unsuspecting Schepern, who placed full reliance on his colleague and the troops. Scarcely, however, had the latter reached the barracks, ere symptoms of insubordination broke out, and soon proved that the spirit of disaffection was deeply ingrafted among them. The evening passed off tranquilly ; but towards two A. M., the piquets and guards deserted their posts ; the whole regiment rose on their officers, tore the Dutch cockades from their caps, discharged their muskets in the air, cast away or sold their arms and appointments, and rushing through the streets in the wildest state of excitement and inebriation (for they had been well plied with liquor by the emissaries of the people), filled the

air with shouts of "Long live the Belgians!" "Death to the Dutch!" It is but just, however, to observe, that not the slightest act of violence or outrage was committed. Their only anxiety was to escape from the regiment; and this anxiety was increased not only by their ordinary term of training having expired on that day, but by the accidental appearance inshore of an unusual number of vessels, beating to windward, which were artfully reported to be Dutch craft coming into port in order to carry them off to Holland. In short, so expeditious were they, that by three P. M. of the same day, the whole of the four battalions had deserted, except a portion of the officers and non-commissioned, with some fifty old soldiers.

"Having discovered that he was on the eve of being abandoned by the troops, and being warned of the danger that he and his countrymen were likely to incur from the populace, Schepern assembled all the Dutch at nightfall, and gave them secret directions to prepare for immediate flight. A vessel having been procured, the whole party, with their families, amounting to about one hundred and twenty individuals, embarked at midnight, and made their escape to Flushing. Their departure was timely; for on the following day, the Belgians, in despite of capitulations and the laws of nations, arrested the Dutch officers at Mons, Tournay, Ypres and elsewhere, as well as those who were on their route through Bruges to return by Eccluse and Breskens to Holland.\*

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\* So vigilant were the populace, that neither travellers nor couriers escaped. An English gentleman, charged with despatches from government to Mr. Cartwright at Brussels, was arrested by the mob at Bruges, and carried before the commission of public safety, which, after satisfying themselves that he was not a Dutchman, finally permitted him to proceed on his journey.

“ It would be impossible for any one that had not witnessed these scenes, to form an idea of the effect produced on the mind, by a sight so utterly opposed to all those principles of duty, loyalty, and obedience that are characteristic of regular armies. The bursting of a typhon could not be more sudden and overwhelming than the dissolution of the whole. It is but just, however, to remark, that the majority of the officers exerted every nerve to maintain the discipline of their corps, and literally shed tears of shame and anger at conduct so disgraceful to disciplined troops ; but their efforts were vain. Nor was this the only occasion in which the Belgian officers conducted themselves in strict conformity to those rules of honour that ought to be the sacred, the inviolable guide of the soldier. However much they might have sympathized in the views of their fellow-citizens, or panted for the independence of their country, the majority continued faithful to the monarch to whom they had sworn allegiance, until a proclamation from the Prince of Orange left them at liberty to continue in the service of Holland, or to join the national standard.

“ It has been stated that no excesses were committed at Ostend. It is not less worthy of observation, that on traversing the country by Bruges, Ghent, and St. Nicholas, to the *Tête de Flandre*, the traveller neither encountered the slightest obstruction, nor heard of a single instance of outrage or robbery, although thousands of disbanded soldiers covered the roads, and were scattered through the surrounding villages ; a fact the more remarkable, since there was no police, no government, no civil or military authority ; and thus crimes might have been perpetrated with the utmost impunity.”

But to return to the capital. On the departure of

the royal troops, the upper quarter of the city offered a most melancholy spectacle, strangely contrasting with its previous brilliant aspect. The citizens, who flocked to the theatre of recent combat, shuddered as they gazed on the scene that presented itself, in the park and adjacent streets. The sudden conversion of this beautiful portion of the metropolis into a field of carnage and desolation, was to them both incomprehensible and unparalleled in barbarity. Though hitherto lukewarm, their breasts now swelled with animosity against the Dutch. The whole weight of their execration fell upon Prince Frederick. From this hour, that which had hitherto been a mere uprising against the system of administration, was converted into an irreconcilable war against the dynasty. The word *Orangist* became henceforth a term of proscription.

In the park, the statues, trees, gates, and ornaments were shattered or defaced; the walks, alleys, and hollows, were strewn with fragments of fire-arms, gun-carriages, uniforms, and military equipments. Here, the mangled bodies of dead horses obstructed the path; there, lay a still palpitating, half-stripped, unburied corpse; and there again, a dozen others, barely covered by a few handfuls of earth or leaves. Here, ensanguined or discoloured streaks marked the trace where some wounded victim had dragged himself from the scene of combat; while there, deep indentures in the sand, and dark coagulated pools, covered by myriads of insects, indicated the spots where other gallant men had made their last death struggle.

The Hôtel Torrington, the buildings contiguous to the palace, and those fronting the Botanical Gardens

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\* The Hôtel Torrington, so called from its having been the residence of Lord Torrington, when ambassador to the Austrian Governor-

were converted into a heap of reeking ashes: the noble mansion of Mr. Méeus was reduced to cinders; its proprietor, denounced as an Orangist, was compelled to seek protection for his wife and family in the country; while an infuriated and brutal populace revelled in the unrestrained licentiousness of devastation and plunder.\* The Hôtel de Bellevue, and the adjacent buildings, were so riddled with projectiles as to menace dissolution. The granite posts and massive chains that decorated the foot-paths, were riven asunder; the houses were perforated or spangled with shot; the window-glass shattered to a thousand atoms, and the frames broken; the doors splintered; the interiors ruined or utterly devastated; brains on the walls, and blood on the floors. The streets, intersected at every angle with barricades, were filled with bands of armed volunteers, whose discordant shouts were only hushed as they encountered the funeral convoy of some fallen comrade, on its way to the general receptacle of the killed, in the Place des Martyres. Amidst all this scene of exasperation and misrule, it is worthy of remark that the royal palaces, which offered so tempting a bait to popular vengeance, scarcely received the slightest injury. Nor was it less curious to see the patriot leader, Van Halen, who a few days previous had been contented with a modest abode in some distant quarter, now established beneath that roof which had hitherto been the residence of all that was most exalted and illustrious in Europe. Here, surrounded by his numerous staff, Van Halen issued his orders, and appointed governors to the royal

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general. The buildings near the palace, as well as the mansion of Mr. Méeus and other edifices, were burned by the populace either during or after the combat.

\* The loss of Mr. Méeus was estimated at 1,500,000 francs, including 800 barrels of oil in the tanks and cellars.

residencies. And fortunately so, for it is probable that the palaces were as much indebted for their salvation to his energy and firmness, as the people were for their victory to his intrepidity and that of Mellinet, Charlier, and other volunteers.\*

Even as the fumes of carnage are said to allure beasts and birds of prey, so the rumours of these sanguinary scenes attracted numerous adventurers, of every class and denomination, to Belgium, where they lived at free quarters, and in some instances laid the towns and cities under heavy contributions. These bands, attired in a hundred different garbs, of which the blue frock formed an indispensable part, assumed various denominations, such as the "Belgian Parisian Legion," the "London Belgic Legion," or "The Friends of the People;" fierce, disorderly hordes, having of soldiers nothing but the reckless valour and the thirst for licentious indulgence, uncurbed by discipline. Belgium had become an "El Dorado," which these restless spirits held to be a fair field for advancing their desperate political projects, or for restoring their dilapidated fortunes. Some, however, of the leaders of these bands were not only men of birth and education, but evinced a degree of courage and presence of mind that would have merited unreserved praise, had they not been tarnished by concomitant acts of a less noble character.

It was thus that the Viscount Pontécoulant, son of the French peer of that name, and commander of the Belgian Parisian Legion, rendered immense services to the citizens of Bruges, and by his coolness and bravery, put a stop to the frightful scenes of disorder that a second time afflicted that city on the 18th and 19th of October. Suddenly arriving from Ghent, whence he

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\* The total expenses of Van Halen's head-quarters, during the combat and subsequent days, did not exceed 1765 florins.



was followed by 400 of his troop, Pontécoulant galloped to the great square, attended by a single aid-de-camp, and springing sword in hand among the rioters, partly by his dauntless bearing, and partly by the energy of his words, kept them at bay, until the arrival of his followers, who seized several ringleaders, and conveyed them prisoners to Ghent. Then consulting with the mayor and municipal officers, who had fled for security to a private house, he issued a proclamation, which is not one of the least remarkable documents of that epoch, since it shews the extraordinary attitude and powers assumed by the leaders of these bands.\*

In the meantime the *de facto* government at Brussels, proceeding with that energy and promptitude which is the ordinary characteristic of revolutionary times, assumed the title of "Provisional Government of Belgium;" thus extending its powers over the whole country, and thereby subverting at one blow the whole royal power. It further commenced its administrative career by issuing several proclamations. The most remarkable of these were—firstly, a decree, declaring that justice should be administered in its name, in all the tribunals throughout Belgium: secondly, an appeal, calling upon the troops to abandon the Dutch standard, and liberating them from their allegiance: thirdly, a declaration, stating that, in consequence of the inability of Brussels commerce to meet its pecuniary engagements, the payment of all bills due on the city should be postponed for twenty-five days—a bold and unprecedented measure, which added immensely to the revolutionary influence, and averted the evils that were anticipated from commercial distress and bankruptcy: and, fourthly, a

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\* See Appendix, No. 18.

proclamation, "inviting M. Louis de Potter and all other Belgians to return to their country."

De Potter, who had been publicly banished, and was desirous to be recalled by some act proclaiming the remission of his sentence, though disappointed at this laconic and vague notice, lost no time in quitting Lille, where he had awaited the invitation of the provisional government, and set out for Brussels. A more striking instance of the capriciousness and instability of popular favour, never was exemplified than in the forty-seven days' reign of this celebrated personage. The following description of his entry into Brussels, extracted from the notes of an eye-witness, is at once graphic and veracious.\*

"The immense popularity De Potter had attained surpassed every thing of the same kind in the memory of the oldest men: even that of Vandernoot in 1790, or of the Prince of Orange in 1820. His journey from Tournay, where he was first recognized, was literally a triumphal march. He might have travelled the twenty leagues, carried, or rather dragged by the arms of the population, that thronged from every side to touch or gaze upon him. The mayors, the authorities, the musical societies, waited on, escorted, and disputed the honour of receiving and lodging him. At Tournay, Leuze, Ath, Enghien, Hale, and lastly at Brussels, the horses were taken from his carriage, and the people drew him along, in despite of his remonstrances, whether real or pretended! Universal shouts of "Liberty and De Potter for ever! Long live the Belgic Lafayette! Long live our defender!" rent the air. Single and married ladies struggled for the honour of embracing him; flowers and laurels were offered to him; so that he wept for very joy and emotion.

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\* "Esquisses de la Revolution de la Belgique." Brussels, 1830.

“ At six o'clock he reached the gate of Anderlecht, attended by several bands of armed volunteers that had joined him on the road. Here he found a numerous detachment of civic guards, and more than 20,000 citizens. Followed by this immense multitude, he proceeded on foot to the town-hall, where he was received by all the members of the provisional government, who threw themselves upon him, and had like to have smothered him in their embraces, hailing him as the principal author of the revolution. At seven o'clock he appeared at the balcony and addressed the people. Thunders of applause drowned his words.”

Such is the correct picture of De Potter's entry and momentary popularity: a popularity founded on the prosecutions he had undergone, and the exertions of the journals in his favour, rather than on any intrinsic merit of his own. For although he was a man of undoubted talent, an able jurisconsult, a good classic, an elegant, caustic writer, and a loud declaimer for liberty and equality, it was well known that he was ambitious and overbearing; that he aimed at supreme power; that although he had the head to devise, he had not the heart to execute any bold project; and that, while he preached agrarian equality, no man was more covetous of increasing his own treasures. Being well versed in the history of ancient and modern revolutions, he thirsted to imitate Marius, Sylla, Cromwell, or even Robespierre; but he lacked two or three great elements of success—namely, a disregard for danger and a contempt for money. He hated monarchy, and loved a republic, because, even in the extremest intoxication of his triumph, he knew that he could not aspire to a crown, though he might perchance become president.

Thus, insomuch as his popularity was sudden and overwhelming, and his entry triumphant and honour-

able, so was his fall rapid, and his departure pitiful. The man who on the 29th of September had been raised to a level with all that Belgium had ever produced most illustrious and noble, was as suddenly cast down by the ostracism of the nation, and treated with a contumely as degrading as ever had befallen the commonest political mountebank. Never did popular idol, crowned with the tinsel lustre of mob celebrity, sink down into such a night of oblivion. So that ere long, men would have forgotten that he lived, had he not occasionally thrust himself on their notice, through the medium of some republican journal. Nay, this idol, whom thousands had obeyed, as though his behests were those of a god, could scarcely find a single hand to shield him from the filth cast on him by the very proletaries who, a few weeks previous, would have offered him their bodies as a foot-stool.

On the morning subsequent to De Potter's arrival in Brussels, a decree announced to the nation that he was adjoined to the provisional government. He also communicated this event in a letter addressed to his fellow-citizens, in which appeared the following professions of faith :

“ Liberty for all ! Equality of all before the supreme power, the nation, and before its will, the law ! People ! what we are, we are *through* you ; that which we will do, we will do *for* you.”

There is no circumstance more worthy of attention than the contrast between the influence so suddenly acquired by the members of the provisional government and their private and public antecedents. The merits and qualifications of all, except Messrs. Jolly and Rogier, have been already detailed. The former, who had served with credit as a subaltern of engineers, had abandoned the career of arms for that of the arts, and

had lived in the most complete retirement ; but, though a promising artist and honourable man, he neither possessed influence, abilities, energies, or knowledge of administration necessary for the Herculean task of re-organizing the wreck of an army, of which not a vestige remained save the raw material. Consequently, in less than a fortnight he retired and made way for Goethals, who had been advanced to the rank of general of division on the 7th of October. His brief administration was, therefore, an utter failure.

The other, Mr. Charles Rogier, descended from a respectable French family settled on the Meuse, was scarcely known to the public before the outbreaking of August. As a practitioner at the Liege bar, and professor of French literature at the university of that city, he was esteemed by the limited circle of his acquaintance ; but he enjoyed no general fame either as a jurisconsult or political economist ; and would probably have ended his days in comparative insignificance, had not the revolution called forth his energies, and opened for him a new field of exertion. He was one of those that might exclaim with Cicero :—  
“ *Neque cuiquam tam statim clarum ingenium est, ut possit emergere ; nisi illa materia, occasio, fautor etiam, commendatorque contingat.*” Being, however, endowed with great firmness and personal courage ; possessing that blunt eloquence and decision, which is so effective in times of trouble, and being ardently devoted to constitutional liberty, he soon brought himself into notice. Disgusted with the conduct of government, he embraced the popular cause with fervour, but not with blindness. His only aim was redress of grievances, and not subversion of the crown ; for it is undeniable that when he entered Brussels at the head of his volunteers, the extent of his hopes was an administrative separation, under the vicereignty of the Prince of Orange. The energy and presence of mind that he displayed at Liege

in curbing the mischievous spirit of the populace when inclined to pillage ; the boldness with which he led his detachment through the centre of the royal army ; the firmness and prudence of his conduct, from the moment of his arrival at Brussels to the last hour of the defence to which he had mainly contributed, gave him great influence over the people, and rendered his nomination highly satisfactory to the volunteers, who associated his name with those of the first heroes of the revolution. Being linked by private and public sympathies with M. Lebeau, Rogier early associated himself in the views of that statesman ; and although there were occasions when he abandoned himself too lightly to the excitement of the moment, his parliamentary career has shown that constitutional monarchy has not a more devoted advocate, nor his country a more zealous servant.

By a remarkable anomaly, there was not a single individual composing this self-elected government that could boast of any superlative antecedents. Not one of them had been a member of either legislative chamber, or, with the exception of De Potter, in any way known to the country at large. It is true they were all devoted partisans of liberty, and had many times advocated her cause, both in the journals and at the bar ; two or three also possessed superior abilities. But no political halo surrounded their brows — no previous parliamentary career, or public services, had entitled them to pre-eminence. They were cast forward by the sudden throes of the revolution, and, grappling boldly with the times, skilfully converted them into instruments of advancement.

Various fortuitous circumstances also contributed to the first foundation of their power, and none, perhaps, more cogently than the convocation of the States-General at the Hague. For, supposing the deputies of the

south to have been assembled at Brussels, or even in any other Belgian city, it is not to be supposed that Charles de Brouckère, De Meulenaere, Le Hon, Gerlache, De Chokier, and others, whose merits as orators, politicians, and patriots were universally acknowledged, should not have entered into competition with individuals who were comparatively obscure.

The conduct of the Belgic deputies being moreover subject to much criticism at this period, the members of the provisional government skilfully availed themselves of their absence to fortify their own power, though they were subsequently compelled to admit some of them to a share in the administration. Whatever might have been the opinion entertained by the Belgic people of their representatives, dispassionate consideration soon placed their character in its true light. Nothing could be more critical and embarrassing than their position, nor more judicious than their conduct. In the heart of an inimical country; cut off from ordinary communications with the south; aware that an hostile army was advancing on the towns that contained their families and properties; alarmed by daily reports of the defeat of their countrymen, and the destruction of their native cities; ignorant of the real state of affairs; compelled from motives of policy to remain at the Hague, while their hearts and thoughts were at home, they were accused of cowardice and want of patriotism, when, in fact, they were giving essential proofs of moral courage and civic devotion.

It is true, they might have returned home, or distinguished themselves by violent propositions and speeches ill-befitting a grave legislative body. But they could not employ the latter without exasperating even the liberal portion of their Dutch colleagues; nor could they have adopted the former step without deviating from the constitutional course, which they had resolved

to pursue, and thereby involving the rejection of the two great questions submitted to their deliberation. This proceeding was the more politic ; since, in the event of the submission of Brussels, it was of vital importance to reserve the constitutional means of securing both the separation and the revision of the fundamental law.

These measures, proposed by the message of the 13th September, were in fact debated during the attack on Brussels, and were carried affirmatively on the 28th and 29th. The first, by a majority of 50 to 44 ; the latter, by 55 to 43 votes.\* The address in reply to the king's speech having been previously voted, the extraordinary session was closed on the 2nd of October, and the southern deputies returned home forthwith, and there found the provisional government established as firmly as though it had long formed part of the national institutions.

The first great point that occupied the attention of De Potter and his colleagues was the political conformation best adopted to the immediate exigencies and collateral position of the nation. "The provisional government," says Mr. Nothomb,† "propounded to itself, and as it were *à priori*, three fundamental questions, destined to arise from events still incomplete ; namely, shall Belgium erect herself into an independent state ? What form of government shall she adopt ? Shall she separate herself entirely from the house of Orange ?" The ultimate solution of these questions was reserved for the national congress, ordered to be convoked by a decree of the 4th of October ; but a passage of this decree already revealed the views of its authors.‡

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\* M. de Stassart and two other deputies were absent.

† "Essai Histor. et Polit.," par Nothomb.

‡ See Appendix, No. 19.



Although the provisional government was nearly unanimous as to the question of national independence, much difference of opinion existed as to the form. De Potter, who coveted the presidency, strongly opined for a republic; therefore, all connexion with the house of Nassau was utterly opposed to the object of his ambition. Mr. Gendebien, though a partisan of democracy, warmly advocated a reunion with France; while Mr. Van de Weyer, and the remainder, who were devoted to independence on a monarchical basis, were no way disinclined to preserve relations with the Nassau family, inasmuch as concerned the Prince of Orange individually—always providing that his royal highness should unequivocally abstract himself from all national and family ties, and frankly offer himself to the Belgic people as their chief.

This latter plan was by no means impracticable as regarded the nation, nor impolitic as concerned Europe. The revolution had not been originally directed against the dynasty; for, in the first place, the insurgent chiefs had sworn “on honour,” to maintain it. Secondly, it was universally understood that the Prince of Orange was strongly opposed to the assault on Brussels, and that he was at that moment disgraced for espousing the popular cause; therefore, however fierce the antipathy to Prince Frederick and the king, the majority of the nation and army were well disposed to the heir to the throne. Of the concurrence and support of all European cabinets, there could be no question. From the banks of the Thames to the shores of the Neva, the nomination of the latter would have been hailed with joy. Even the French government, then under the pilotage of Lafitte, was averse to the entire exclusion of the Nassau dynasty; at all events, it went through the form of sending an agent to Brussels, to endeavour to obtain the adjournment of this measure.

A striking political syllogism tended to confirm the opinions of those who advocated an independent monarchy. Firstly, the mission undertaken by Gendebien, in order to sound the French government and the leaders of the movement party, as to the practicability of a reunion, had not been attended with satisfactory results: the one reluctantly but frankly declined the tempting bait; the other could only offer hopes and contingent promises. Secondly, the immense ascendancy of monarchical over democratic principles, both in France and Belgium, could not be denied even by the most sanguine republicans—a fact fully confirmed in the latter country by the national congress, where, out of two hundred members, *thirteen* only voted for a republic. Thirdly, the most short-sighted politicians were aware, since there was little prospect of inducing France to occupy Belgium, or, in other words, of dragging her into a war, in order to propagate anti-European doctrines, that the only means of preventing re-action was to embrace a system of negotiation, which could alone throw open the doors of communication with other powers, and afford a prospect of developing those seeds of nationality and independence which the most politic and patriotic were desirous to foster.

There certainly existed a party, both in and out of the government, eager for the employment of aggressive measures. A plan offering some probabilities of temporary success was suggested, and in the then phrenzied state of the Belgic people, and the demoralized condition of the Netherlands army, it is possible that, had the attempt been made, Maestricht might have followed the example of Mons and other fortresses, and that the patriots might have penetrated to the Moerdyk, and overrun the whole of North Brabant. But, setting aside all stratagetical considerations, this success must have been ephemeral, and

would have been a death-blow to Belgic independence. Even if England had remained neuter—and this was scarcely possible, since the *sine quâ non* of British neutrality was the non-interference of Belgium with neighbouring countries—Prussia must have sprung forward to repulse the aggression. France would thus have been compelled either to abandon Belgium to restoration, or, sacrificing her true interests to the fever of public opinion, she must have broken her alliance with Great Britain, declared war on Prussia, and commenced those very hostilities that were so strongly deprecated by her statesmen, and so contrary to the prudent policy and interests of Louis Philippe.

Fortunately, the majority of the provisional government fully comprehended the perilous risks into which the movement party was eager to seduce them. They consequently curbed the ardour of their troops, and casting aside the firebrand with which they might have ignited Europe, devoted themselves to cultivate a good understanding with other powers. This politic proceeding, however much opposed to the popular but fallacious theory, that “revolutions commenced by the sword should only terminate by the sword,” was the salvation of Belgium and of European peace. The men who advocated this system, and who unflinchingly adhered to it under circumstances the most trying, deserve no ordinary commendation.

Not only at the period in question, but up to a recent period, the falsest impressions have existed in Europe as to the prevalent demand for re-union with France, and the general existence of a republican spirit in Belgium. As regards the first, the question was essentially anti-national, anti-Catholic, and was never seriously mooted or proposed for public discussion. Not only did the infant government publicly declare that Belgium

should constitute an independent state, but the national congress unanimously ratified this decision in one of its earliest sittings. At the same time, it must be admitted, that a numerous body of commercialists and jurisconsults at Mons, Philippeville, Liege and Verviers, together with a portion of the aristocracy, would have gladly hailed a re-annexation to France, could this have been effected with the assent of foreign powers. But, nevertheless, the measure would have been as generally unpopular in 1830 as it was when Dumouriez addressed his letter to the convention in 1793.

As relates to the second point, nothing can be more erroneous than the received opinion that the Belgic people were generally imbued with democratic tendencies. The following are striking proofs of the contrary. As early as the 12th of October, while yet De Potter was in the zenith of his power, and while the country was still a prey to agitation and excitement, a commission was appointed to draw up a project of constitution. This commission, composed of twelve most devoted patriots, proclaimed, as an essential preliminary, the necessity of determining whether the proposed constitution should be founded on a monarchical or a republican basis. The former was adopted, with the exception of one voice, that of M. Tielemans.\* This dissentient, who was a participator in the doctrines, exile, and short-lived popularity of De Potter, and who was devoured by an ambition not less potent than that which animated his friend, was soon named to a post in the administration, a place for which his habits of business and previous occupation in some measure qualified

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\* This decision was ratified by the national congress on the 22d of November, 1830, by a majority of 174 to 13.

him. But his maxims, founded on the most extravagant and dangerous theories, were not suited to the more moderate views of his colleagues. Thus, after surviving M. de Potter for a brief space, he retired from office, and sunk into that retirement, where he is probably destined to rest ; unless some fresh convulsion shall call him from his retreat, and revive those illusive republican visions, which are so essentially anti-sympathetic to the general views of the Belgic people. Yes ; a hundred-fold more so in Belgium than in Holland, where the oligarchical principles of more than two centuries have not been effaced by the monarchical attachments of twenty years ; for, if one would seek for the seeds of the old leaven of democracy in the Netherlands, it must be in the father-land of the illustrious Barneveldt and De Witt, and not in the Belgic provinces.

So rapid, however, was the revolutionary contagion, that in less than three weeks after the defeat of Prince Frederick, the Brabant tri-colour waved from every tower and spire ; whilst trees of liberty reared their heads in every square and public place throughout the land. The authority of the provisional government was universally recognized, and its decrees had the force of laws. The ministerial departments were formed. The civil functionaries suspected of Orangism were superseded. The military commanders shared a similar fate. The civic guards were

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\* First Belgic ministry :—

<i>Interior</i> .....	Messrs. Tielemans.
<i>Finance</i> .....	Coghen.
<i>War</i> .....	Jolly.
<i>Justice</i> .....	Gendebien.
<i>Foreign, or Diplomatic Commission</i>	Van de Weyer.
	De Celles.
	D'Aerschot.
	Nothomb.
	Le Hon.

re-enrolled, and the war department commenced a new system of military organization, copied from that of France. The Marquis of Chasteler, who had served as a captain of hussars in 1815, and who raised the corps of Brussels sharp-shooters, which still bears his name, was entrusted with the re-formation of the cavalry, and General Wauther with re-modelling the infantry regiments. Permission was also granted to several officers, to levy free corps in the metropolis and provinces. Every effort was made at the same time to place a few batteries of artillery in a fit state to take the field. Van Halen, who appears to have excited the jealousy of De Potter, and to have been suspected of aiming at the dictatorship, had been forced to resign, after enjoying the command eleven days. But, as some amends for this disgrace, he was appointed Lieutenant-general on the retired list, with a pension of ten thousand francs, and half that sum in reversion to his wife. Imputations of a serious nature were, however, levelled against this officer. He was accused of having promoted the disorders, that, by an unfortunate coincidence, broke out at Bruges, Mons, Malines, and other places, at the period of a visit made by him in the provinces ; and, being suspected of Orangism, he soon shared the fate that so often awaits objects of popular favour. . Arrested by order of De Potter and his colleagues, he was cast into prison at Mons, and prosecuted, but, being quickly able to prove his innocence, was honourably acquitted.

In the meantime the Dutch, who had been abandoned by the greater part of the soldiers, and many officers of infantry — by a portion of the cavalry, and by all the garrison artillery, except that of Antwerp and Maestricht—were constrained to evacuate Malines and Liérre, and to withdraw behind the Rupel and Néthes ; having their right at Boom, their advance and centre at

the bridges of Walhem and Duffel, and their left on the Chaussée leading from Liérre to Antwerp. The patriot right wing under Niellon, having occupied the former town, an attempt was made by the Duke of Saxe Weimar to dislodge them from this important point; but he was repulsed with loss. Thus, the left flank of the Dutch was laid open, and the troops at Duffel and Walhem were subjected to be turned, and even cut off from Antwerp; which would infallibly have been the case had the patriots been provided with cavalry. If Prince Frederick entertained any serious intention of maintaining his position on the Néthes, it was contrary to all the rules of strategy, to allow the enemy to cross that river, or to penetrate into Liérre. Few positions offer such facilities for defence. A handful of men ought to have defended any given point against a host. But the demoralization of the Netherlands troops was such as to baffle all ordinary provision.

The whole of the Belgic active forces, under the orders of Major-general Nypels, who had superseded Van Halen, proposed to follow the retiring foe. The right, consisting of about 3000 infantry, a dozen cavalry, and six field-pieces, under Lieutenant-colonel Niellon, after driving the Dutch from Campenhout and Liérre, established itself at the latter place. The centre, under Nypels and Mellinet, composed of about 4,000 infantry, a brigade of guns, and a few mounted vedettes, pushed on through Malines, and pressing the Dutch rear-guard, occupied Walhem, and forced the latter to withdraw beyond the bridge.

Thus, by the 22d October, the whole of the country on the left bank of the Rupel and Néthes was in possession of the patriots, who were busily engaged in preparing to pursue their advantages to the gates of Antwerp. At the same time defensive precautions were not neg-

lected at Brussels. The gates were stockaded, secured with breast-works and *chevaux-de-frize*, and well flanked with parapets for cannon. The park was surrounded by deep intrenchments, and a similar line of works extended from the gates of Hal, Namur, and Louvain, to the canal. The houses in the vicinity of the gates were loop-holed; the observatory was converted into a block-house, and a multitude of palisaded barricades intersected the inner ramparts and adjacent streets. The city was thus rendered secure from any sudden attack.

Although the public treasure scarcely contained a thousand pounds in specie, money was soon forthcoming for the exigencies of the moment, and the public receivers announced that the contributions were paid with alacrity and regularity. It was evident, however, that a forced loan would immediately be required to meet the extraordinary expenditure.\*

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\* Voluntary gifts, to a considerable amount, were subscribed and forwarded to the treasury, but these were far from sufficient for the exigencies of the government.



## CHAPTER II.

INTELLIGENCE OF PRINCE FREDERICK'S DEFEAT REACHES THE HAGUE—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE DEPUTED TO PROCEED TO ANTWERP TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT — MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCES—THE LATTER ISSUES A PROCLAMATION, AND DISPATCHES THE PRINCE KOSLOWSKY TO SOUND THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT—FAILURE OF THIS MISSION—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE, AFTER SOME DAYS' HESITATION, DETERMINES TO BREAK OFF ALL COMMUNICATION WITH HIS FATHER'S GOVERNMENT, AND TO PLACE HIMSELF AT THE HEAD OF THE MOVEMENT—IS REJECTED — QUILTS ANTWERP, AND RETURNS TO HOLLAND—THE PATRIOT TROOPS ADVANCE, AND AFTER DRIVING BACK THE DUTCH REAR-GUARD UNDER THE DUKE OF SAXE WEIMAR, SUCCEED IN GAINING POSSESSION OF ANTWERP — THE DUTCH RETIRE INTO THE CITADEL, AND BOMBARD THE CITY.

WHILE the events narrated in the foregoing chapters were passing in Belgium, the Hague cabinet, confiding in the bloodless success of Prince Frederick's mission, and the restoration of legitimate order at Brussels, was occupied in discussing the best method of settling the embarrassing question of administrative separation, which, by a calculation of the votes of the chambers, had appeared inevitable as early as the 20th of September. With the ardour and enthusiasm natural to his character, and perhaps with a sinister foreboding of misfortune, the Prince of Orange was eager to set out for the south, and at once to proclaim that separation, which, had it been frankly promised by the king on the 5th of September, in lieu of being torn from him on the 29th, and that by the very means his majesty had indignantly spurned, it would have saved the monarchy. The affirmative solution of the questions propounded in the message of the 13th being considered unavoidable,

the king, in despite of his inveterate prejudices, appeared more inclined to listen to the suggestions and entreaties of those who urged him to depute the hereditary prince to establish a separate government at Antwerp. But this measure was so repugnant to the king's feelings, so completely at variance with his principles and his hopes of reducing the patriots to submission, that it was postponed from day to day, and was still undecided, when the astounding intelligence of Prince Frederick's retreat reached the Hague on the night of the 28th.

It was with mixed sensations of grief and shame that the Prince of Orange received the intelligence of an event so injurious to the military fame of his family, so fatal to the interests of the throne. But, however painful, he at least had the sorrowful consolation, that the fatal results were produced by measures diametrically opposed to his own conclusions, and that he was exempt from all participation in the odium attached to the military operations. He therefore cherished, and had grounds for cherishing, hopes that the Belgic people would not confound him with his brother, nor visit on his head the political errors of his father. But, by a terrible fatality, the frank and loyal conduct of the prince was treated as a machiavelian artifice. He was declared to have violated his oath, and to have sent his brother to encounter all the hazards, and thus to reserve for himself the means of re-appearing with advantage on the scene.

For the first time, those that had treated the representations of the prince and the Belgic deputies as exaggerated, and who had maintained submission to be an indispensable preliminary to concession, now began to open their eyes, and to deplore that obstinacy and impolicy which induced them to oppose the return of

the former to Brussels. Defeated in the field, discomfited in the chambers, and abandoned by diplomacy, the government found itself outflanked, and borne down on every side. With bitter hearts and reluctant hands, they were now constrained to grasp at those very measures, as a last precarious plank of safety, which the prince had frequently recommended, and the Belgic people earnestly implored them to accept, as a sheet-anchor of security. The bitterness of these feelings was not diminished by the conviction that they were solely indebted for these pernicious results to their own impolicy, and their utter disregard to public opinion and to the signs of the times.

After a succession of cabinet councils, and consultations with foreign envoys, who now, when there was no alternative, strongly opined for concession; after appointing a commission to compile a project of organization, "based on a separation and revision of the fundamental law;" after instructing its ministers at foreign courts to demand the strict execution of the treaty of Vienna, the cabinet came to the tardy determination of according temporary powers to the Prince of Orange to act as governor of the southern provinces, and appointed three ministers and seven councillors to aid him in his functions; thus establishing an administration totally distinct from that of the Hague, as far at least as regarded all internal questions. A royal decree of the 4th of October announced this resolution to the nation.\* But this satisfactory document came too late. Indeed, it was looked upon as an additional monument of the ill-timed and vacillating policy of the government. Precisely one month sooner, and it would have been effectual. It was now treated with derision, and added

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\* See Appendix, No. 20.

to the triumph of the south. The nation had gone too far to dream of retraction, or reconciliation with the crown. The bond was utterly broken. A government like to that mentioned in De Potter's letter had effectually risen up by the side of the Batavian throne. The royal personage and his authorities were virtually extinct. The monarch was already spoken of as deposed.

However, no sooner had the government come to this decision, than the Prince of Orange hastened to Antwerp, whither he was immediately followed by the Duke d'Ursel, Messrs. de la Coste, and Van Gobelschroy, as well as the Counts d'Aerschot, De Celles, and other members of the States-General. There his royal highness found Prince Frederick, who inhabited the right wing of the palace, the left of which was destined for his own reception. The meeting of the two princes was embarrassing. The chivalrous glories of a long line of heroes had met with a stain in their descendant. The laurels won by the Prince of Orange himself on twenty battle-fields, to the least sanguinary of which the combat at Brussels was but a mere skirmish, were tarnished by his own brother, and a dark shadow obscured the family escutcheon. But the paleness, the depression, and mental suffering of Prince Frederick; the conviction that the disaster resulted from a vicious plan of attack, and from misplaced forbearance rather than from any lack of personal exertion, deeply affected the elder prince; and, although the bitterest feelings filled his heart, he threw himself into his brother's arms, and wept.

Indeed, such persons as were admitted to Prince Frederick's presence could not witness unmoved the change that anxiety and distress of mind had produced in his appearance within a few days. His countenance, rarely brightened by beams of hilarity, now portrayed

intense sorrow in every lineament. It was not the actual repulse from Brussels that affected him (for the ablest generals and bravest troops are liable to similar disasters), so much as the odious calumnies lavished both on him and the corps under his orders; and perhaps the secret upbraiding of his conscience, which told him that the measures he had adopted had lost the monarchy. When speaking upon this subject, he vainly strove to conceal his emotion; and although he disdained to notice the charges that affected his courage, he expressed extreme anxiety that the British nation, and indeed Europe in general, should know that he had spared no pains to diminish the disorders inevitable to an assault, and that the aspersions cast upon him were as unmerited as they were odious. For this, Europe gave him full credit; but no arguments, no proofs could eradicate the fatal impression made upon the Belgic people.

One of the first public acts of the Prince of Orange, was a proclamation, announcing the object of his mission.\* But this unfortunately produced no better effects than that of his father. It was evident that His Royal Highness, although he professed to have supreme authority, was dependent on orders from the Hague, and that his powers were *temporary*, and subservient to those of General Chassé and Prince Frederick, who still retained the command of the army. This destroyed all confidence, and neutralized all his efforts.

But never was distrust more undeserved. The intentions of the prince were frank and loyal in the extreme. At that moment he would willingly have sacrificed his best blood to serve the people, or to save the throne. Had his filial piety been less, or his moral energy

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\* See Appendix, No. 21.

greater, he might have triumphed. Divided between devotion to his father, and his conviction that only one path could lead to success ; still doubting the irretrievable lengths to which the revolution had been carried, and relying on the assurances of passive partisans, instead of seeking to baffle the resistance of active opponents, he temporized when instant action was essential, and began to act when the hour of exertion was gone by. He was, moreover, surrounded by injudicious friends, and timid if not treacherous counsellors. He was secretly counteracted by his brother, and openly opposed by Chassé, who, as well as all other Dutch generals, burned with an ardent desire to revenge the recent disasters.

From the first moment, however, of his arrival at Antwerp, his royal highness adopted such measures as were considered likely to flatter national prejudices, and anxiously sought to procure information as to the best means of obtaining the support of the provisional government. Various emissaries were employed for the latter purpose, and it was in consequence of advice from Brussels that he resolved to despatch a neutral agent, to treat directly with De Potter and his colleagues, of whom almost all were declared to be favourable to his views.

The person selected for this mission was Prince Koslowsky, who, being out of favour at the Court of St. Petersburg, was at that moment sojourning at Ghent. This talented diplomatist forthwith obeyed the prince's summons, and instantly proceeded to Brussels, where, after communicating with Mr. Cartwright, and addressing himself to D'Hoogvorst and Van Halen, he was introduced to some members of the provisional government ; but, notwithstanding the tact and ability displayed by Koslowsky, the mission completely failed.

Setting aside the suspicions awakened by the intervention of a person who, in the then state of popular excitement, was looked upon as a Russian spy, rather than as a mediator on the part of the Prince of Orange, the propositions of which Koslowsky was the bearer were not calculated to produce the desired effect.—

1. The provisional government had proclaimed national independence, and the prince mainly founded his claim on legitimacy, and his rights of succession. 2. His royal highness demanded the fulfilment of their promise to maintain the dynasty, and they objected that the dynasty had violated its own oaths. 3. He still clung to the union, and talked of a connecting link with his father, while they declared the separation to be absolute and irrevocable—not obtained as a boon from the crown, but wrenched from it by force; and, consequently, they renounced all further allegiance to the *ex*-king. In short, there was scarcely a single preliminary on which there was any appearance of concord. “Let him come amongst us alone,” said they, “as a Belgian, or only attended by Belgians. Let him throw himself into our arms, and trust to the votes of the people. We can offer no guarantees, but these are his only chances.” It is true, some members of the provisional government would gladly have availed themselves of the prince’s offers; but these were not only uncertain of the extent and duration of their own influence, but were completely under the control of their master-spirit (De Potter), whose mere breath would have sufficed, at that moment, to have raised a hurricane that might have overwhelmed them all beneath its blast.

Those who counselled the Prince of Orange on this occasion, seem to have acted in utter ignorance of the real state of affairs; and, above all, of the immediate position of the provisional government, both in regard

to each other, and to the daily press ; which latter had assumed undisputed dominion over the public mind, and may be said to have set its foot upon the very neck of the nation. Maturer consideration ought to have convinced his royal highness and his advisers, that his only prospect of success was to offer himself unconditionally to the people—not as a link in the dynastic chain, but as the prince best calculated to satisfy national and European exigencies : that is, by reconciling the liberty of the one with the tranquillity of the other. But, even admitting that he had adopted this bold plan, it is still problematical whether the jealousies and vindictive animosities of the few, would not have prevailed over the more pacific vows of the many. Besides, it required no common energy, and disregard of all moral and political ties, for a man in his exalted position to attempt an enterprise so novel and precarious.

It would have been a desperate undertaking, without a chance of retreat in case of failure. Before him was doubt, hazard, a probability of insult, and a possibility of death. Behind was ignominy, national hatred, family dissension, and European objurgation. Success would have stamped him a usurper in the eyes of his father, and as an alien in those of his native country ; whilst defeat would have thrown him on the world a political outcast, without a home or family. In either case, friends and enemies would have looked upon him with suspicion, and probably stigmatized his conduct as attended with immorality and filial apostacy. Yet this plan, with all its evils, was the only one that offered a chance of salvation for the dynasty ; and the cabinets of Europe would have done well to have urged him and his family to its frank adoption, and to have supported him, not only by all the mediatory influence at their disposal, but with solemn assurances of instantly recognizing the national



independence. For the obstacle lay, not in any paramount objections on the part of the Belgians to the prince, but in their fears of re-action, and of again falling beneath the Dutch yoke.

A situation of greater embarrassment could scarcely be imagined. At length, after wavering some days, his royal highness overcame some portion of his scruples, but not to the extent necessary to insure success. After fruitlessly occupying himself from the 5th to the 16th of October, in devising means for the better government of a country, which fiercely disavowed his authority, and contemptuously repudiated his decrees; after seeing his pacific and conciliatory assurances unequivocally counteracted by a royal proclamation, which designated the southern provinces as rebels, and energetically called the Dutch to arms, in the name of their king, their country, and their God;\* after a second ineffectual effort to negotiate with the provisional governments, and the commission appointed to draw up the projected constitution; after a vain attempt to effect a general exchange of prisoners; after visiting and succouring these prisoners on board the pontoons, and eventually liberating the whole—a generosity unimitated by the Belgians:† in short, after adopting every possible measure of conciliation, he determined to break off all direct connexion with his father's government, to dissolve the royal commission of administration, to acknowledge the national independence, and to place himself at the head of the movement. A proclamation to this effect was published on the 16th.‡

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\* See Appendix, No. 22.

† This proceeding was the less excusable on the part of the latter, seeing that the greater part of the Dutch prisoners were retained in despite of capitulation, or had been seized by the populace when deserted by their troops.

‡ See Appendix, No. 23.

But this resolution, like all others emanating from the same source, utterly failed. It offended the susceptibilities of the people, and aroused the jealousies of the provisional government, who declared, by a contemptuous counter-proclamation, "that the national independence, being a fact established by the victory of the people, required no ratification; that they protested against the prince having any power or share in the authority, which was solely vested in their hands; and added, that the people having consummated the revolution, and expelled the Dutch, they, and not he, were at the head of the movement." The prince's decision was in fact not only tardy and incomplete, but it was attended by two striking defects. For, whilst it far outstepped all bounds as regarded the king, it fell short of the exigencies of the patriots. It thus excited to the utmost the dissatisfaction of the one, and failed to captivate the good-will of the other. Overwhelmed with choler and indignation, the former instantly revoked the powers accorded to his son, and gave public vent to his feelings in a message addressed to the States-General, on the 20th of October.\* The latter, assuming the democratic tone of the first French revolution, declared "that William of Orange, having recognized the national independence, had placed himself under the necessity of choosing either to become a Belgic or Dutch subject. If he determined for the latter, he would find himself in flagrant hostility with the Belgic people. If he selected the former, he must go through the forms of naturalization, acknowledge the government, submit to the laws, and consider himself on a level with any other Belgic citizen." No medium was allowed to be possible. It was farther argued that by recognizing Belgic indepen-

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\* See Appendix, No. 24.

dence, and the legality of a national congress, "William of Nassau (the Prince of Orange) had admitted the nullity of his own rights and those of his family."

Disheartened by the ill success of his efforts, alarmed by the menaces and reproaches of his father, and moved by the sullen murmurs of Chassé and the Dutch generals, repentance quickly followed, and the prince was therefore as eager to recede as he had been anxious to advance. Consequently, after an ineffectual effort to conclude an armistice, a proposition haughtily replied to by the provisional government, who demanded "the preliminary evacuation of Maestricht, Antwerp, Termonde, and Venloo, and the retreat of all the royal troops beyond the Moerdyck;" after seeing every attempt or proposition for conciliation disdainfully rejected by the Belgians, and his authority disputed by Chassé, who placed Antwerp in a state of siege on the 24th; after liberating from their oaths a number of Belgian officers, who having tendered their resignation, and refused to fight against their countrymen, had been placed under arrest; after witnessing the inundation of the Polders, and the still more dangerous overflowing of the revolutionary spirit in the hitherto loyal city of Antwerp, the prince embarked for Rotterdam, on the night of the 25th, and abandoning all hope of conciliation, with a bleeding heart bade adieu to the Belgic provinces, in a short but touching address.\*

Thus terminated a mission which served but to consolidate the strength of the insurgent government, and to tear its last prop from that of the crown; a mission that produced no other result than to demonstrate more fully the generous, but vacillating character of the prince, and to expose more clearly the system of con-

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\* See Appendix, No. 25.

tradictory policy pursued by the Dutch government. For what could be more paradoxical than to charge the hereditary prince with the formation of a distinct local government in the south, to admit the question of separation, and to promise forgetfulness of political errors ; and yet, ere the ink of this decree was dry, to issue a proclamation declaring these provinces “in a state of rebellion,” and calling the Dutch to arms, for the avowed purpose, not of defending their own hearths, but of reconquering and crushing their revolted brethren ?

The proceeding of the prince was not only injudicious as regarded the present, but it exercised a most pernicious influence over his cause on more than one subsequent occasion. For it undermined the confidence hitherto reposed in his sincerity and firmness, and proved that although he might have the inclination, he had not the courage, to separate himself entirely from his father ; and between the father and the Belgic people it was clear that there could be no further connecting link, unless it were rivetted by foreign bayonets or proclaimed by foreign cannon. Although such were, and still are, the auxiliaries called for by the partisans of the Nassau dynasty, it is evident that these are not the means best calculated to place or maintain a sovereign on the Belgic throne. The conduct of His Royal Highness on this occasion was the more unfortunate, from its showing not only that he lacked that promptitude and energetic decision, which alone paves the way to victory, and gives great minds so powerful an ascendancy over the casts of fortune, but that he was neither fully master of his own will, nor totally submissive to that of the king ; and that, although he coveted the fruit, he had not hardihood sufficient to climb the tree. Thus, neither on this nor upon any subsequent occasion, did he ever abandon those half measures, which are so inimical to success in moments of crisis. His

entry into Brussels on the 1st of September had afforded ground to suppose that his moral energies were equal to his dauntless personal valour; but the events of the twelve succeeding months plainly demonstrated that, if he had the hand to execute, he wanted the head to guide. However pre-eminent for many of the noble qualities which distinguished his ancestors, his talents and energies as a statesman and commander were not on a par with the exigencies of his position. Thence the mission to Antwerp in October, 1830, was an utter failure, and thence the short campaign of August, 1831, added nothing to his reputation either as a strategist or a tactician. But of this hereafter.

The departure of the prince from Antwerp, preceded by that of his brother, was the immediate forerunner of that memorable event which has coupled the name of Baron Chassé, not with a bold and terrible operation by which an important city, and perhaps a crown, was restored to its master, but with one of the most useless acts of rigour that stands recorded in the annals of war.

A word as to the military operations immediately preceding that catastrophe is necessary. These were not less unfavourable to the Dutch than those of September. On the forenoon of the 22nd of October, the patriot bands, forming an irregular mass of about five thousand men, with sixteen guns, commenced a simultaneous movement upon the line occupied by the royal troops, who were about seven thousand strong, with forty pieces of artillery. Of these nearly one half, forming the rear-guard, were in position upon the Néthes.\* The

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\* These streams have their source, the one near Lummel, and the other not far from Hechtel, in the province of Limbourg. The lesser falls into the greater Néthe at Liérre, and thence runs through Walhem, where it assumes the name of the Rupel, which discharges itself into the Scheldt opposite Rupelmonde.

patriot leaders, having held a council of war on the previous day, it was determined that Niellon, pushing forward on the Chaussée from Liérre to Antwerp, should turn the Dutch left flank, and thus menacing their rear, compel them to fall back on Berchem ; and, while the centre threatened Duffel, that the left under Mellinet should make demonstrations on the bridge of Walhem, which was deemed too strong to admit of any direct attack, even should the Dutch neglect to destroy it.\*

But the reckless valour of the patriot volunteers was not to be restrained until Niellon had executed his manœuvre. At dawn on the 23rd, a small detachment, led on by one or two daring men, threw themselves into boats, above and below the village, and succeeded in crossing the stream with little opposition, whilst another body gallantly charged the bridge in front, and in despite of a galling fire of grape and musquetry, quickly made good their passage, and forced the Dutch, who had partially set fire to the wooden piles, to fall back upon Contich. On the following day the patriot left, after a sharp skirmish near the last-mentioned place, effected its junction with the right, at the spot where the Liérre and Malines roads unite, near the

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\* Niellon, now a naturalized Belgian major-general, had been a non-commissioned officer in the French service. At the moment of the revolution he was associated with the director of the Park theatre. Mellinet, also a Frenchman, had likewise served in the French service, in which he had risen to the rank of general of brigade. Pecuniary and other circumstances had rendered it necessary for both to quit France. Kessels, now a major of artillery, had originally served as a non-commissioned officer in that arm ; but had abandoned the service, and at a later period had purchased the skeleton of a whale, which he exhibited at Paris, and was decorated by the King of France with the cross of the Legion of Honour. All three distinguished themselves by their courage, during the attack on Brussels, and on every subsequent occasion. During the short campaign of 1831, Niellon displayed military talents of a higher order.

*vieux Dieu.* Advancing from thence on the morning of the 25th, these two corps, supported by sixteen pieces, made a simultaneous attack on the Duke of Saxe Weimar's rear-guard, which held Berchem with about three thousand infantry, several squadrons, and two brigades of guns; and, although roughly handled, they succeeded in forcing the duke to seek shelter under the walls of the fortress.\* On the 26th, Mellinet, having received intelligence of a rising within the city, dispatched Niellon and Kessels to feel their way on the side of the Borgerhout suburb. Here the latter took possession of the half-moon in front of the gate, and turning the cannon abandoned by the Dutch upon the city, fired a few blank rounds to announce his presence. In the meantime, the centre debouching from Berchem, advanced cautiously upon the Malines-gate; and the left, pushing forward by Wylrick upon Kiel, succeeded in driving the enemy into the body of the place, and thus formed the investment of only the whole exterior, extending from the Scheldt by Kiel on the left, round to the high road conducting to Bergen-op-Zoom on the right. A detachment upon the left bank having followed the movements of those on the right, took possession of Burcht.

While these operations were going on without the walls, the emissaries of the provisional government, in conjunction with various disaffected persons, had been actively engaged in preparing a diversion within. During several days the hostile spirit manifested by the lower orders, had caused much disquietude to the governor. These turbulent symptoms had been restrained by the presence of the Prince of Orange; but no sooner

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\* It was in this affair that Count Frederick de Mérode was mortally wounded. His remains were interred near the spot where he fell. A monument has been raised there to his memory.

was it known that his royal highness had departed, than the explosion instantly burst forth. Divers partial disturbances having taken place, the garrison, consisting of about eight thousand effectives, was kept under arms; the guns of the fleet and citadel were in constant readiness, and an attempt was made to palisade the Malines-gate, and thus to convert it into a block-house. But the general commanding appears to have confided in the destructive resources of his citadel for avenging an attack, rather than to have exerted any extraordinary means to anticipate commotion, and to guarantee himself from external surprise or internal treachery. For, though he assured the friends of government of the arrival of reinforcements, and of other energetic measures to be adopted for the security of the place, he availed himself most sparingly and injudiciously of those which were already at his disposal. In fact, until the adventurous patriots had rushed into the city, and audaciously running down their field-pieces to the water's-edge, fired at the arsenal and fleet, he spurned the idea of their attempting so desperate a *coup-de-main*.

Scarcely had day dawned on the 26th, ere a riotous body of the populace commenced operations by pillaging a small vessel laden with old arms, and this at half-pistol distance from the ships of war. Having effected this, they threw themselves on several isolated military posts, some of which fled, while others surrendered. Thus, in the course of a short time, the people became masters of almost every part of the city not occupied by the main guards, and having thereby procured an ample supply of arms and ammunition, commenced a harassing attack upon the troops in the squares and at the gates. But with the exception of the piquet at the town-hall, and another in the *grande place*, the other Dutch detachments maintained their ground until the



morning of the 27th ; when the *porte rouge*, and immediately afterwards that of Borgerhout, were wrested from them, and having been instantly opened by the populace, Niellon, Kessels, and their followers rushed into the city, encountering but trifling resistance except near the residence of the governor.

A sudden panic now appeared to seize upon the garrison. Hastily abandoning the whole line of external and internal works, except the Lunettes St. Laurent and Kiel, and a portion of the arsenal, they retired into the citadel, pursued by Niellon and Kessels, who charging along the ramparts, dashed upon the Malinesgate, which they burst open amidst deafening hurrahs, and thus admitted the corps of Mellinet. At this moment the authorities made their appearance, bringing with them the city keys ; an offer derided by the patriot chiefs, who claimed the honour of an assault. Following up their success, the volunteers eagerly rushed after their flying foes to the very foot of the citadel glacis ; and thus, in less than two hours, this important and splendid fortress, which might have resisted the attack of a regular army of fifty thousand men from without, and which had a garrison and fleet sufficient to have repressed any popular movement within, was irrevocably wrested from the crown. On this occasion, General Chassé committed one of those grievous errors, so necessary to be avoided in the event of popular tumult. In lieu of concentrating his masses, and withdrawing his small detachments, so as to prevent their being overpowered and cut off one after the other ; instead of occupying in force the most important points, especially the gates, and covering them with barricades or entrenchments—a precaution most essential in times when the barricades of the people are the great instruments of popular triumph ; in lieu of keeping his reserves

ready to move in dense columns, so as to sweep the streets and ramparts, he divided them into small parties and patrols, and left the gates with little more than the ordinary number of men, and thus subjected his people to be harassed, demoralized, and annihilated in detail.

A prevalent opinion existing that Chassé had resolved to avail himself of the earliest pretext to sacrifice a portion of the city to the jealous exigencies of Dutch commerce, and that he had thus hastily withdrawn his garrison in order that he might execute this barbarous project, the regency, hoping to negotiate an armistice, dispatched a flag of truce to the citadel, attended by a delegate from the provisional government, as well as some of the foreign consuls. The mission was successful, and Chassé having concluded a verbal truce, instantly hoisted the white flag. This being observed by Mellinet, Kessels was directed to proceed to the citadel to inquire into the nature of the negotiation, and to claim the right of ratification; but he was referred to the civil authorities, and informed by the Dutch general that he would neither recognize nor hold communion with the rebel leaders. Elated with their triumph, and indignant at the reception their commissioner had met with, the patriot chiefs hastened to the town-hall, whither an officer had been sent by Chassé to conclude a definite arrangement with the municipality. Here Mellinet and Niellon asserted that the city, having been taken by assault, they, and not the regency, were the only competent authority; then declaring all former arrangements to be null and void, they drew up an insolent project of capitulation, which was indignantly rejected by Chassé; at the same time, the delegate from the provisional government produced the following document, empowering him to act in their name.

*“ The Provisional Government of Belgium.*

*“ Central Committee,*

*“ Authorizes M. Van der Herreweghe to take possession of the city and citadel of Antwerp, and to see it occupied in the name of the Belgic people.*

*“ Brussels, Oct. 26, 1830.*

*(Signed) “ MERODE, &c., &c.”*

The history of civil wars can scarcely furnish an official instrument parallel in audacity to these few lines. That such a fortress as Antwerp, having a numerous and chosen garrison, under experienced and brave commanders, with a powerful and devoted fleet, moored at musket-shot from its open quays; a fortress immediately under the guns of that celebrated citadel which Alba had purposely raised to overawe the people; having a large portion of its respectable burghers and communal guard firmly attached to the government, and being in itself of such paramount military and political importance, as to render its preservation a matter of vital necessity; that such a fortress should be abandoned almost without a struggle, is sufficiently incomprehensible; but that the patriot government should anticipate such triumph, and actually empower its delegate “to take possession” of the citadel, is certainly not one of the least singular and daring episodes of the revolution. Yet the general commanding has been held up to Europe as a model of firmness and military skill. Had General Chassé’s talents or energy borne any proportion to his reputation, Antwerp, and perhaps all Belgium, would have now owned the dominion of Holland.

The mystery that envelops the causes immediately leading to the fearful catastrophe of the 27th of October, is so profound; the assertions on one side are so opposed to the asseverations of the other, that it is extremely

difficult to arrive at any impartial conclusion. Indeed, the proceedings of both were of a nature so little honourable to either, that they are equally interested in concealing or disfiguring the truth. On the one side, the Belgians affirm that a preconcerted plan had been laid to sacrifice the arsenal and valuable depôt of merchandize upon the first pretext, no matter how frivolous; that combustibles had been placed for this purpose in various parts of the buildings; that paid emissaries were employed to mingle with the populace and fire upon the troops, in order to make sure of that pretext, which had been averted by the truce; and that the Dutch soldiers, and not the volunteers, were guilty of the first aggression.

On the other hand, the Dutch affirm that the infraction was entirely on the part of the patriots, and that although a heavy musquetry fire had been kept up during some time, not a single cannon was discharged until Kesels, the commander of the assailing artillery, had brought up a six-pounder, and began to batter the arsenal gate, in despite of the white flag which still waved upon the citadel; a fact corroborated by the report of the patriot chiefs. The Dutch likewise indignantly disclaim all malice prepense, and adduce as a proof of this their readiness to renew negotiations. They assert, with great justice, that had it been their desire to destroy the city, the whole would soon have shared the fate of the entrepôt. That their object in confining their fire principally to this quarter, was not to satisfy the demands of jealous Dutch merchants, but to prevent the contents of the arsenal from falling into the hands of the patriots; and that the destruction of the one was the unfortunate result of its immediate vicinity to the other. After calmly and impartially weighing the evidence on both sides, there appears little doubt that the first infraction of the

armistice was the act of the volunteers. It is not, therefore, against the right of Chassé to repel force by force, but against the impolitic abuse of this privilege, that the historian should raise his voice. There can be no doubt that *he was authorized*, by the strict laws of war, to wreak his vengeance upon the city, and to render the whole responsible for the few. But such an act of barbarity was not only inconsistent with the civilization of the nineteenth century and the dictates of humanity, but the guilty escaped, while the innocent alone suffered; and although Chassé partially employed the means of destruction at his disposal, he neglected to obtain the advantageous conditions that were within his reach.

The course to have been pursued was simple and efficacious. Had it been adopted on the 25th, the revolt had never broken out, nor could the volunteers have entered the city. On the first appearance of sedition, Chassé should have withdrawn his small guards, contented himself with maintaining his gates, and having turned some of the guns of his ramparts on the town, have strongly occupied the posts enfiling the streets. He should have kept a sharp look-out from Fort Montebello, on the Berchem road, and from the lunette Carnot, and the half-moon on that of Borgerhout. Upon the first symptom of insurrection, he should have issued a short, but energetic proclamation, somewhat to the following effect:—"Inhabitants of Antwerp! The safety of the fortress entrusted to my charge is menaced. The first open insult offered to any of my soldiers—the first shot fired on any post or detachment, shall be avenged by the extermination of the quarter of the city where such aggression may take place. The bombardment shall continue until the ringleaders are delivered up. Citizens! the salvation of your homes

and fortunes is in your own hands ; unite with me to maintain tranquillity, or the consequences be on your own heads !”

Supposing, however, that he had not adopted this step *à priori*, it was his duty to have replied to the insulting proposition of Mellinet and Niellon, by reminding them that the city was under the muzzle of the guns of the citadel, forts, and fleet ; that unless the whole of the volunteers instantly evacuated the limits of the fortress, liberated the Dutch prisoners, restored their arms, and brought those of the people to the foot of the glacis, and hoisted the Orange flag on every turret in the place, that he would reduce the whole to a heap of ashes.

Nay, even after the expiration of the bombardment, had he peremptorily demanded the evacuation and submission of the city, as the *sine quâ non* to further concessions, he might have imposed his own terms. The terrible lesson the populace had received had rendered them sensible of the imminence of these perils ; and the delegates of the provisional government would have paused ere they persisted in sacrificing the second city of Belgium to the obstinacy of a few desperate men. But Chassé unfortunately let slip the golden opportunity, and thus paved the way to the subsequent downfall of the citadel.

All that is known of the incidents immediately leading to the bombardment is, that a multitude of volunteers, many in a state of intoxication, and all in a most violent paroxysm of excitement, spread themselves through the streets contiguous to the citadel and arsenal, and perceiving some Dutch soldiers at the window of the latter, first insulted, and then fired at them. This aggression was quickly answered, and volley after volley rapidly succeeded on both sides. A Belgian six-pounder then opened its fire on the arsenal-gate, and the volun-

teers, having forced the entrance with axes, rushed into the building, where they made several prisoners.

Justly exasperated at this infraction of the truce, for which Niellon, Mellinet, and Kessels should have been held responsible—for they might have prevented the employment of artillery, although perhaps they could not have restrained the insolence of their men, so as to hinder partial discharges of musquetry—Chassé ordered two or three guns to be fired from the raveline and bastion facing the arsenal. But this being ineffectual, and the attack on the latter continuing, he hauled down his white flag, and gave the signal for action agreed upon with the fleet, which consisted of eight vessels of war, presenting a broadside of upwards of 90 guns.

An awful and simultaneous roar of artillery now fell on the ears of the affrighted inhabitants. In an instant the citadel, fleet, and forts hurled forth their converging thunder. An iron deluge rained upon the city walls, and clattered among the buildings. Showers of shells, bombs, and carcases, were heard cracking, bursting, and bellowing around the venerable towers of St. Michael; the uproar of their explosion being multiplied by the echoes of the cathedral. Walls, roofs, and floors fell crushed beneath the resistless weight of projectiles, which sought their victims in the very cellars, confounding mangled bodies and ruined edifices in one mutilated and confused heap. Ere long, dark columns of smoke and jets of flame were seen to rise. The arsenal and entrepôt were fired. The obscurity of the night soon gave way to a red and glaring lustre, that converted the dark vault of heaven into a fiery canopy, whose lurid reflexion announced the fearful catastrophe to the distance of many leagues.

The terror and stupefaction of the inhabitants baffles all description. Some concealed themselves in their

vaults and cellars; others rushed wildly through the streets, shrieking and bewildered. Such as had horses or vehicles, no matter of what kind, seized their valuables and hastily fled into the country. Others, alone intent on saving life, darted through the gates on foot, and sought refuge in the neighbouring fields. Old men, pregnant women, and young children; rich and poor, the hale and the sick, were seen flying in frantic disorder. The flames having gained the prison, there was no time to remove its inmates. The doors were therefore thrown open, and nearly two hundred convicts were let loose, but none had the heart to plunder. Terror, confusion, and despair, reigned paramount. Weeping women and children clung for succour to men who could afford them no relief or consolation. Some died of fright, others lost their senses. Groans, screams, and prayers were heard between the pauses of the thunder, intermingled with maledictions on the destroyer, and curses on the revolution. In a few hours, however, all those that had power to move, or were not transfixed with terror, had fled into the country. The roads were covered with fugitives of all ages and sexes, who, with tearful eyes, turned to gaze on their devoted homes. The darkness of the night, awfully relieved by the red glare of the flames; the hissing and roaring of the destructive element, the thunder of the cannon, the rattling of shot and falling of timbers, the frantic screams of women and children, and the groans of the wounded and dying, all united to fix an impression of horror on the mind, not to be effaced by time or space.

As the evening advanced, various attempts were made to reach the citadel, but the intensity of the fire, the noise, and darkness, baffled every effort. At length, between nine and ten, P.M., a deputation of four persons, preceded by a trumpeter, succeeded in gaining the ad-



vanced post, and, having delivered a letter with which they were charged by Mr. Rogier, who had arrived from Brussels, as delegated from the government, were admitted into the interior. This letter urged General Chassé to order a suspension of arms until daylight, when it would be perhaps possible to renew the negotiations that had been “apparently interrupted through the error of a few drunken men.” Chassé lost no time in replying “that he consented to this proposition, on condition that his troops were no further molested; declaring that, in the event of the slightest aggression, he should recommence firing; and terminating by calling on the provisional government to nominate a commission, empowered to treat with him on the following morning.” This being assented to by Rogier, orders were instantly issued to the fleet and forts to discontinue the bombarding, which had lasted, without interruption, from half-past three till half-past ten, P.M.

During the night other delegates having arrived from Brussels, a second deputation was dispatched to the citadel, and a preliminary truce was determined upon early on the 28th. On the 30th, Mr. Rogier concluded a more formal armistice for five days; which, though never strictly adhered to on either side, formed the basis of the subsequent diplomatic negotiations, until the surrender of the citadel. This convention was further ratified on the 5th of November, by the addition of the following laconic postscript:—“Affairs shall continue *in statu quo*. The renewal of hostilities shall be announced four days beforehand.”\*

The injury done by the bombardment, as respects the generality of the city, has been greatly exaggerated;

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\* See Appendix, No. 26.

for, with the exception of some few casual accidents, little damage was inflicted on the central or remote quarters. On the other hand, the brunt of the fire being directed upon the arsenal and entrepôt,\* the whole of these buildings, together with the venerable church of St. Michael, and the greater part of the adjacent street, were reduced to a heap of ruins. All that remained of the rich contents of the one was a calcined and reeking mass of sugars, coffees, hides, cloths, silks, tissues, and fragrant spices; all that could be rescued from the other were a few remnants of iron or shot. The mischief was also principally inflicted by the citadel, for the fleet had but slightly maltreated the buildings on the quays; their shot passed over the city and lighted harmless in the fields. These are important facts, for they prove that Chassé did not avail himself to the utmost of the means of destruction at his disposal. It is evident, that had it been his intention to annihilate the whole instead of a part, he could speedily have effected his object. Had the range of his howitzers and mortars been diverged; had the ships, not elevated their guns; in short, had his projectiles been scattered over the town, in lieu of being concentrated on one point, it is indisputable that ere the expiration of

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The official estimate of the loss of merchandize, according to the reports of the customs, was 1,888,000 florins; the real value is averaged at 2,200,000. No valuation has yet been made of the buildings. The damage done to private houses in the city has been declared to be 429,466 florins; that of furniture, &c. about 250,000, although the proprietors claim 440,886. Thus, the official return of the whole loss, exclusive of the buildings of the entrepôt and arsenal, may be taken at 3,880,000 florins, in round numbers. The loss of killed were eighty-five, of whom sixty-eight were civil, and seventeen military; the number of wounded about 120; of these, eighty were cured in the public hospital.

seven hours, the whole of Antwerp might have been involved in a blaze of destruction.\*

But this must be taken as a palliation of the intent, not as an apology for the act; which had the sole merit of destroying the goods and habitations of innocent citizens, without chastising the aggressors, curbing the progress of the revolution, or regaining a particle of what had been lost. It had not even the advantage of example, for, with the exception of Maestricht and Venloo, the Dutch had no longer possession of a single fortress; and of these the one was soon wrested from them, and the other only preserved by fortuitous circumstances, or rather by the anticipatory energy of General Dibbets, commanding at Maestricht, which formed a meritorious contrast to the useless and tardy rigour of Chassé at Antwerp. The one, with confined means but with unlimited activity, firmly maintained his ground, without spilling a drop of blood, or firing a shot. The other, with every advantage of force and position, abandoned that which he ought never to have surrendered; and after neglecting the golden opportunity of recovery, contented himself with gazing on the scorched ruins, beneath which he had buried the last hopes of the house of Nassau. For this deed was more fatal to their cause than the loss of twenty combats.

The scorched ruins of the Carmelite tower of St. Michael's is a monument that will record to future ages how Lieut.-general Chassé, at the head of 8000 choice troops, fled from a few armed rabble and undisciplined volunteers, abandoned a city that he had

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\* It has not been possible to obtain a return of the number of rounds fired on this occasion by the fleet; but one fact has been ascertained, that the quantity of *cartridges* expended exceeded that of *shot*—a proof that the guns were not always *shotted*.

neither talent or energy to defend, secured himself behind the shelter of his citadel, and thence immolated aged men, pregnant women, young children, and the property of inoffensive citizens, either to an impolitic thirst for revenge, or to a flagitious condescendance to Dutch commercial egotism. When posterity learns that Lieut.-general Chassé had ample time for preparation, and still more ample means for preserving the city of Antwerp; that he gave it up almost without a struggle, and thus lost to the Dutch crown the great key of Belgian dominion; that, under the pretext of revenging half-a-dozen shots fired on his troops, he bombarded a populous, ungarrisoned city, during seven hours; and then contented himself, not with general submission and the expulsion and chastisement of the aggressors, but with the recovery of *twelve oxen, three barrels of spirits, and two barrels and a half of rice!*—when posterity think of this, they will marvel that a veteran soldier should thus tarnish his hard-earned laurels by a deed so inglorious; and that a government should thus wantonly add fuel to the intense fire of national antipathy, and while it applauded this barbarous feat of destruction, utterly forget that the wealth and resources of the bombarded city exist, not in its buildings, but in the noble river that bathes its quays.

Having stated that there is every reason for believing that the fault of aggression lay with the volunteers, and that the leaders should have been held responsible, it is just to observe, that Mellinet, Niellon, and Kessels devoted themselves, with rare intrepidity, to diminish the evil their people had produced, and to carry succour where it was required. They not only exerted their utmost efforts to rescue the wounded, to direct the fire-engines, and to maintain internal tranquillity, but several tumbrils, laden with powder, having been deposited in a building likely to become a prey to the flames,

Mellinet rushed to the spot, and, amidst a deluge of projectiles, harnessed himself to one of the cars, and, encouraging the people by his example, dragged them from the spot, and thus averted an explosion. The two others gave equal proofs of self-devotion at the arsenal, where nearly forty ammunition waggons were rescued from the flames. Many of the inhabitants, and some of the foreign consuls, also distinguished themselves in a most laudable manner, and none more so than those of Great Britain and Hanover.\*

From this period, until the winter compelled the ships of war to abandon their moorings before the city, the fleet maintained its position tranquilly in the Scheldt, and the Dutch troops having retired within the limits prescribed by the convention of the 30th of October, abandoned the remainder to the patriots.

Cort-Heiligers having likewise fallen back on North Brabant, the Duke of Saxe Weimar embarked from the citadel, with the guards and superabundant troops, for Rotterdam, and was appointed commander of a corps on the extreme left. Thus ended this memorable and eventful episode.

Belgium now assumed a new aspect. The revolution was rapidly advancing to its consummation. With the exception of the citadel of Antwerp, and fortress of Maestricht, the Brabant banner waved over every town. The whole country acknowledged the dominion of the provisional government. One great national act was alone wanting, to break down all further connexion with the Orange dynasty. This measure, which was nothing less than the perpetual exclusion of the House of Nassau, was already in preparation, and alone awaited the assembly of congress to receive development and ratification.

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\* Baron de Hoche, Larpey and Mr. Ellerman.

## CHAPTER III.

THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT SOLICITS THE GREAT POWERS TO INTERVENE BY FORCE OF ARMS—IS REFUSED—THE CONFERENCE ASSEMBLES—THE DUTCH INVOKE THE TREATY OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE—ARE REJECTED—MESSRS. CARTWRIGHT AND BRESSON ARRIVE WITH THE FIRST PROTOCOL AT BRUSSELS—ARMISTICE CONCLUDED—BELGIAN CONGRESS OPENED—PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT CONFIRMED—DE POTTER RETIRES—CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION IN ENGLAND—EXCLUSION OF THE NASSAU FAMILY VOTED BY CONGRESS—MISSION OF MR. LANDSBERG TO BRUSSELS—GENERAL STATE OF EUROPE.

SCARCELY had intelligence of Prince Frederick's discomfiture reached the Hague, when the king dispatched the most pressing solicitations to the four powers that were parties to the eight articles of the London treaty, as well as to France, calling on them to fulfil the obligations imposed on them by the treaty of Vienna; or, in other words, to interpose between him and his revolted subjects, and to renew the armed intervention of 1815. For, although the demand for forcible co-operation was not overtly put forward, the real purport of the application was not to be mistaken.\* But, however well inclined the Rhenan powers and German confederation, might have been to obtemperate to this invitation, or however well disposed the British cabinet to support the cause of the Prince of Orange, the latter could not be induced to deviate from that pacific system, which had formed the basis of its policy with regard to

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\* A phrase in the speech of M. Versloek de Soelen of the 20th of January, proves that armed intervention had been demanded. "His majesty," said the Dutch minister for Foreign Affairs, "in order to stifle the revolution, *first invoked the arms of his allies according to treaties,*" &c. &c.

France, while the former were too much occupied in watching the seeds of sedition at home, to be enabled to lend assistance in curbing revolution abroad. France, also, was too deeply interested in preventing re-action within her own territory, to aid in any measure tending to promote restoration, at her very threshold.

Besides, the English administration stood on the verge of dissolution. The party which had held the reins of government so long that power seemed a prescription rather than an elective right in their hands, felt themselves about to be ejected from the tenure into which they might be said to have been infeodated by the tacit consent of king, lords, and commons. A universal craving after reform, with all its mingled virtues and illusions, had taken irresistible possession of the public mind, producing a general thirsting after constitutional ameliorations. Thus, while the whole British people were resolved to stand up for the assertion of more extensive franchises at home, they were no less determined to oppose all direct interference with internal affairs abroad. The ministry were not blind to this truth, and thus Lord Aberdeen affixed his signature to the first two acts of the Conference,\* which, without directly consecrating the revolutionary principle in Belgium, or openly acknowledging that of separation, tacitly recognized the provisional government, as a power to be treated with on a basis of reciprocity, and thus paved the way for the celebrated protocol of the 20th of December, 1830 (No. 7.)—the first harbinger of Belgic independence.

This document, which frankly admits the inefficacy of the treaty of Vienna, as regarded the Netherlands kingdom, is highly interesting, for it is declared, “that

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\* Protocols of 4th and 17th November (Nos. 1 and 2.)

the events of the four previous months had unfortunately demonstrated, that the perfect and complete amalgamation, which the powers wished to effect between the two countries, *had not been obtained*; that henceforward it would be impossible to effect it; that the object of the union *was thus destroyed*; and that it was consequently indispensable to have recourse to other arrangements, in order to accomplish those intentions, to which the union was meant to serve as a vehicle." That is, that the object of the treaty being to erect a barrier against France, and the integral maintenance of its provisions being no longer practicable, it became indispensable to adopt such measures as would secure the independence of the two fractions of the kingdom, in order to replace the barrier services of the whole. This solemn and undisguised admission of the original vices of the union, and of the necessity of co-operating in combining the future independence of Belgium with the stipulations of treaties, with the interests and security of other powers, and with the maintenance of European equilibrium," was ably combated by the Dutch cabinet; but their remonstrances produced no other effect than a determination, on the part of the powers, to continue their labours to secure the independence of a country to which the force of events compelled them to extend their protection.

All, therefore, that could be obtained by the king of the Netherlands was that the powers should assume the character of arbitrators; a character that subsequently gave rise to numerous difficulties and contradictions; not on the part of the plenipotentiaries, but on that of the two parties upon whose disputes they were required to pronounce judgment. For, so long as matters remained undecided; so long as there was a prospect of restoration, Holland, at whose express demand, and



for whose special benefit the Conference had been assembled, not only called for *arbitration*, but eagerly desired still more vigorous interposition; whilst Belgium, elated with her recent successes, and conscious that she held the brand of universal discord in her hand, expressed the utmost impatience at all foreign interference, and could with difficulty be brought to listen even to *mediation*. No sooner, however, had the ratification of the twenty-four articles guaranteed the independence of the latter, than both parties changed their system. Belgium, wisely founding all hope of consolidating her nationality upon the maintenance of peace, willingly admitted arbitration, and eagerly clung to the treaty of November as her sole ægis; whilst Holland, relying on general war as the only chance of restoring her puissance, and basing her objections upon the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle and her right of *post liminii*, protested against all arbitration, and would only consent to mediation.\*

Although these reclamations served most materially to complicate the negotiations, and to retard their issue, the conduct of the great powers in deviating from the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle was just and reasonable. For, had the Netherlands plenipotentiary been admitted as a direct party to the Conference, the Dutch government would have been established as judge in its own cause; while the Belgians, excluded by the very nature of circumstances from all participation in the dis-

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\* The fourth section of this protocol, signed the 15th of November, 1818, stipulates that all conferences or re-unions touching the immediate interests of the Netherlands kingdom shall only take place in virtue of the formal invitation of such states as the matter may immediately concern, *and under the express reserve of their right to participate therein directly, or through their plenipotentiaries*. The Dutch plenipotentiary, Mr. Falck, was summoned to assist at the Conference as an evidence, not as a subscribing party; thence the complaints of the Hague Cabinet.

cussion, would have been placed in the situation of felons at the bar, without other counsel or interpreter than the very magistrate whose interest it was to condemn them. This was a fact that struck the plenipotentiaries at the first outset; and, in thus eluding the strict letter of the protocol in question, they gave a striking proof of their impartiality and sense of justice. Such a determination was naturally most galling to Holland, who was thus unable to avail herself of the influence she might otherwise have acquired. But the decision was essentially European, and was the only method of meting equal justice to both parties, and thence of maintaining general tranquillity.

It was on the 4th of November that the Conference held its first deliberation at the Foreign Office, and gave birth to the eldest of that long series of protocols, which kept Europe in suspense during so many months; imperishable monuments of the diplomatic skill of their compilers, not less than of the vacillating policy of the day! a policy partly emanating from the latent wish of the Russian cabinet to gain time, and partly to the ardent desire of Great Britain and France to maintain peace, but more especially to the difficulties encountered by all parties in reconciling so many divergent and conflicting interests.

So pressing were the solicitations of Mr. Falck, and so great the alarm of the plenipotentiaries, lest the Belgians, taking advantage of the demoralization of the Dutch forces and the enthusiasm of their own, should carry their victorious arms into North Brabant, that the first protocol was scarcely consigned to paper, ere Messrs. Cartwright and Bresson were dispatched to Brussels to communicate its contents to the provisional government. These gentlemen arrived on the 7th, and after various preliminary discussions and exchanges of

notes, touching the strict interpretation of territorial rights and limits, especially as concerned Dutch Flanders and Maestricht, a suspension of arms was agreed to on the 10th. This preparatory negotiation, ably and successfully conducted by the two agents, produced a second and more detailed protocol on the 17th. Messrs. Cartwright and Bresson, who had returned to London, having been re-dispatched to Brussels, a farther truce was concluded at that place on the 21st, and at the Hague on the 26th of the same month. This convention, projected as much for the interest of general peace as for the advantage of Holland, stipulated that hostilities should cease on both sides, until the conclusion of a more definitive armistice; that the troops should maintain the positions respectively held by them at 4 P.M. on the 21st of November; that the reciprocal blockade of all rivers and fortresses should be raised forthwith; and that a free communication should be established between all places occupied by both parties, without the territorial limits that separated the United Provinces from Belgium, prior to the treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814.\*

But the Dutch cabinet still persisting in obstructing the navigation of the Scheldt, and evincing an evident disposition to revive the restrictions imposed by the 14th section of the Munster treaty, the Belgians continued the blockade of Maestricht, and entertained serious thoughts of attempting a *coup-de-main* on that fortress; an effort offering some prospect of success—

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\* This suspension of arms, or rather armistice, signed by the Belgians on the 15th of December, did not receive full execution until the end of March following, when Lord Ponsonby dispatched Messrs. Abercrombie and Charles White to Maestricht, to verify the state of the communications between that fortress, Aix-la-Chapelle, and North Brabant.—*Pièces Diplomatiques. La Haye*, vol. i.

not only from the recent fall of Venloo, but from the numerical feebleness of the garrison, the sympathetic spirit of the inhabitants, and the weakness of a portion of the fortifications. Although Mr. Gendebien had declined to sign the armistice, and loudly opined for a system of aggression, which would probably have entailed general war, and struck a death-blow to Belgic independence, the remainder of his colleagues fortunately foresaw the difficulties into which such measures would plunge them. By prudently repressing the belligerent ardour of the people and volunteers—for as yet the troops did not merit the name of army—they gradually drew the nation from the dominion of force to that of negotiation, which they were well convinced could alone lead to the consolidation of that nationality, for which the vast majority so ardently thirsted.

It was with this view that the provisional government deemed it expedient to dispatch Mr. Van de Weyer to London, with instructions to open a communication with the British ministers, as well as to sound the opinions of some of the leading opposition members with regard to Belgium. After consulting Sir John Hobhouse, Mr. Hume, and others of the same party, Mr. Van de Weyer was admitted to an interview with Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Wellington; from whom, especially the latter, he received assurances, not only of the pacific intentions of the British cabinet, but of the resolution of all the great powers, to refrain from direct intervention, so long as the Belgians abstained from any act calculated to disturb the tranquillity of other states. It was on this occasion that the Belgian agent was called to an audience by the Prince of Orange, who had arrived in London almost at the same moment. The meeting was painful to both; for it was impossible for the prince to see before him a man to whose exer-

tions were principally owing the destruction of a noble heritage, without the bitterest sentiments of wounded pride and vexation ; whilst it was no easy matter for the other to appear unmoved in the presence of the son of a king, to whose downfall he had been mainly instrumental, and who, as he well knew, was innocent of all the errors of his father's government. The task was the more severe, since he was compelled to tell that prince that the nation, over whom he sought to reign, had confounded him in the same anathema that was about to be fulminated against his whole race.

In the meantime, Maestricht having been closely invested on the left bank of the Meuse by the Belgic regular forces under Daine, and on the right by the free corps under Mellinet, and General Dibbets being sorely pressed for provisions, the Duke of Saxe Weimar was ordered to assemble a convoy for his relief. All things being prepared, his highness broke up from Eindhoven on the 18th of November, and advancing by Peer and Winterslagsche at the head of six thousand men and an ample supply of stores, successfully threw himself into Maestricht on the forenoon of the 21st, after sustaining a trifling skirmish with a Belgian detachment. Leaving a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men in the fortress, the Dutch general made good his retreat on the 22nd, by following the right bank of the Meuse to Mazeyk, where he recrossed the river, and regained his position by Eindhoven without loss. This enterprise, skilfully planned and executed, was highly creditable to the duke's military character, and served in some degree to re-establish the reputation that had been tarnished at Walhem, Contich, and Berchem ; though it is hardly just to ground stratagetical strictures on disasters which resulted from a combination of frictions utterly independent of the control of the general

commanding. For it is ludicrous to suppose that the handful of volunteers, under the patriot leaders, could have carried the strong positions held by the Dutch on the Rupel and Néthes, or have been enabled to drive them back in disorderly rout, had there been any unanimity between the officers, or even a common disposition on the part of the troops to hold their ground.

The solemnity that was so eagerly awaited by the Belgian people at length took place in the capital. On the 10th of November, the national congress assembled for the first time in the palace of the States-General, and was installed in the name of the provisional government by M. de Potter.\* The ceremonial was simple and unassuming, yet solemn and decorous. The classic semi-circle destined for the deputies was filled with men who, though for the most part utterly unaccustomed to the usages and forms of legislative bodies, and generally selected from amongst the most ardent patriots, nevertheless brought with them a full sense of their own power and of the importance of their new vocation. With the exception of two or three individuals, who vied with each other in extravagant exaggeration, the temper and discretion of the rest might at first have served as a model to the oldest legislative assembly. Indeed, the light, airy and symmetrical in-

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\* A decree of the provisional government declared that the number of members should be two hundred, and the mode of election direct. The qualifications of an elector or candidate were, that he should be a native, or naturalized Belgian, twenty-five years of age, without distinction of religion, and paying taxes varying from a maximum of seventy-five florins in the richest, to a minimum of thirteen florins in the poorest provinces, so as to give the whole numerical population an equitable representation; a measure rendered necessary by the extreme difference between the wealth of different provinces, especially those of Flanders and Luxembourg.

terior of the hall of congress, its lofty dome, its graceful columns, its commodious galleries, its plain but appropriate furniture, and its rows of desks, provided with writing materials for each member, was not less striking than the sober deportment of the great majority of the deputies, and the venerable and interesting appearance of the celebrated Baron Surlet de Chokier, who was immediately elected president.

The meeting of congress, an event sufficiently remarkable in itself, was rendered still more so by its being the immediate forerunner of the termination of De Potter's political career, and the extinction of his popularity. His colleagues in the government had the good sense to feel, that independent of the ordinary uncertainties and jealousies inseparable from power, their position was the more precarious from their being self-elected. They were, therefore, desirous to see their mandate revoked, or legitimately confirmed by the representatives of the nation. They consequently tendered their resignation to the chambers, and were rewarded for this politic act of apparent disinterestedness, by having their powers solemnly renewed, in terms the most flattering to their public characters. But De Potter, bitterly disappointed at the prevalent anti-republican spirit, and having neither tact to yield, nor influence to stem the tide of opinion, and who saw his hopes of obtaining supreme power on the eve of dissolution, was resolved to make one desperate effort to turn the current in his favour. Vainly imagining that he was still the popular idol, that the nation held him essential to the conservation of its liberties, and that the mere menace to abandon them would create a movement in his favour, which would produce that anarchy without which he could have no political existence, he

separated himself from his colleagues, protested against the supremacy of congress, and declaring the power of the provisional government to be antecedent to that of the former, declined to accept the mandate, and withdrew.

But his illusions soon vanished. The people, as if ashamed of the grovelling incense they had previously offered at his shrine, heard of his resignation without murmur or emotion. The press, of which he had been the demi-god, either turned against him or remained silent; and his colleagues, inwardly rejoicing at being delivered from a man whose exaggerated principles and ambition were inimical to the general voice, and injurious to the independence of the country, neither expressed regret, nor made the slightest effort to turn him from his purpose. Nothing more was heard of him until a few weeks after, when, having attended a public meeting, and attempted to argue in support of his favourite theories, he had like to have fallen a victim to the exasperation of the people. Though De Potter's abdication produced no effect upon the public mind, his friend M. Tielemans' was more fortunate; but, by a process no way similar. This gentleman, who of all the members of the commission entrusted with drawing up a project of constitution, had alone opined for a republic, addressed a letter on this subject to the provisional government, containing a proposition the most monstrous and absurd that ever entered the head of a political dreamer. This was nothing more or less than that, in the event of the national assembly pronouncing in favour of monarchy, the question of a republic should be again submitted to the deliberation of a new congress at the expiration of *three years*, and *vice versá*! Or in other words, that the country should alternately elect



kings and presidents, and try republics and monarchies every three years, until all parties were able to judge by experience what form of government best suited their inclinations ! This nonsensical rhapsody met the fate it merited. But it had, however, one advantage ; it served to show the measure of M. Tieleman's talents and paved the road for his return to that insignificance from which he had alone been raised by Mr. Van Maanen's impolitic prosecutions.

It was on the 16th that Mr. Van de Weyer returned to Brussels, and made the report of his mission to the congress, who received with unequivocal marks of approbation his assurances of the moderate and pacific intentions of the great powers—an assurance that had the greater weight by its being accompanied with the announcement that the Duke of Wellington's administration was on the eve of giving way to a more liberal ministry. For the names of Lords Grey, Holland, Durham, and other Whig noblemen who were about to assume office, were received by the liberals of France and all Europe as guarantees that the system of non-intervention laid down by the Duke of Wellington, would be acted upon in the most extensive sense of which that system was capable, as far as regarded the constitutional liberty of other states ; while the retreat of Lord Aberdeen was hailed with a degree of satisfaction scarcely to be credited by those who did not witness its influence on the public mind abroad.

Three questions of vital importance, not only to Belgium, but to all Europe, were proposed to congress in rapid succession, and were discussed and voted with a degree of promptitude and energy, that proved the extreme desire of the country to avoid anarchy, and secure national consolidation. On the 18th the question

of independence was carried unanimously ; on the 22d a majority of 174 to 13, determined in favour of a constitutional and hereditary monarchy—without, however, fixing on the title of the future “ chief of the state ;” and on the 23d the more paramount proposition for the “ perpetual exclusion of the Orange Nassau family,” was made by Mr. Constantin Rodenbach, a Flemish physician, whose family possessed considerable interest in the Flanders, and who had long been among the most active members of the Catholic union, and the most irreconcilable opponents to the king’s government.

Although the speech accompanying this proposition betrayed stronger evidence of prejudice and personal antipathy, than of profound argument and enlightened political conception ; although it was replete with passages tending to excite the passions, rather than to awaken reflection ; although it erroneously confounded the name of the Prince of Orange with the unskilful attack on Brussels, and the no less impolitic bombardment of Antwerp, and attributed to him a power of averting events over which he had no control, it was nevertheless the fruit of an intimate conviction that the return of the prince would be the signal for immediate civil war, which could only terminate in the most frightful reaction, and eventually lead to restoration.

A few citations from this and other speeches, will suffice to shew the general spirit that animated the nation at this period. They will afford striking proofs of the impassioned prejudice of the orators, and of the fevered state of the public mind. Indeed, never had a subject of such vital interest a less favourable prospect of calm and impartial investigation. Many of those who were most opposed to the motion, contented them-

selves with giving a silent vote ; and others, who had prepared speeches in the same sense, were converted through want of moral courage, rather than conviction ; whilst those who did speak against it, adopted language even more injurious to the cause of the Prince of Orange than the violent diatribes of the supporters of the measure. Many, however, of those who voted for it, condemned it as premature. “ If I had been consulted,” said Mr. Gendebien, “ the proposition would not have been made at present.” De Brouckère, Destouvelles, and others were of the same opinion ; but being once brought forward, and popular feeling excited, it was deemed impossible to retreat, without plunging the country into a fatal state of uncertainty, and perhaps of anarchy and misrule. Besides, by a singular fatality, the very means adopted by the French cabinet to retard the discussion, served but to accelerate its fate ; for the tardy and lukewarm mission of Mr. Landsberg, produced an effect diametrically opposed to its avowed object ; a result so singular, as to throw the strongest doubts on the sincerity of the remonstrance, and at all events to afford just cause for criticising the mode in which it was conducted.

But let the extracts of the speeches speak for themselves.—“ The pact that united us to the house of Orange,” said the mover, “ was broken on the day on which its chief attempted to substitute his own will and personal opinions for the law. William never showed himself *king* but of Holland ; he was only the *possessor* of Belgium.

“ Have those who admit the possibility of the Prince of Orange’s election, reflected on the painful position in which that prince would be placed ? How could he return to this capital, and present himself to a too confiding people, with whom he has violated his promises ?

In what manner will he make his entry? Will it be by the gate that witnessed the shameful flight of his brother and his cowardly and barbarous soldiers? Will he re-occupy that palace on which the traces of his own shot have inscribed the fatal sentence of the deposition of his family? Will he venture to set up the statues of his father that have been mutilated and trampled under foot by the people? Will he place on his head a crown defiled with blood and filth? What oath can the son of a perjured monarch tender as the gage of his fidelity? What expiatory gift will he offer up at the tomb of the brave that repose in the square of St. Michael? No words of peace, no assurances, no promises, no expiations can repay us for the evils that have oppressed our unhappy country during fifteen years. A river of blood divides us. The name of the Prince of Orange is buried beneath the smoking ruins of Antwerp!"

"Will you elect as hereditary chief the Prince of Orange Nassau?" exclaimed a second (Claes of Antwerp). "No! a thousand times no! You ask my motives. Because the dynasty is anti-national—because its return would be the signal for civil war—because it is impossible to unite that which blood has disunited—because history teaches us that all restorations are but a mere replastering (*replâtrage*), that, sooner or later, render other revolutions necessary. Look to the Stuarts—look to the Bourbons."

"From Brussels to Luxembourg," said a third (the Abbé de Hearne), "there is but one cry—'Down with the Nassaus!' It is impossible that a prince of Orange can reign in Belgium—the people will not hear of it. This sentence is irrevocable. It includes parents and children—it is a malediction, an anathema—it is the invisible hand that traces in letters of flame, 'Thou shalt reign no longer!'"

“Heaven forbid,” observed a fourth (Baron de Stasart), “that I should insult the misfortunes of those princes ; but the horrible scenes of Brussels and Antwerp have rendered their return impossible. The people would rise in mass to repel them, and their arrival would be the signal of the most invincible anarchy. What can nations ever expect from political restoration? The effect of such experiments in other countries is notorious. Distrust, hatred, ill-repressed pretensions, and smouldering vengeance would form the royal escort. No more Nassaus ! This is the universal cry of Belgium, and I trust it will find a general echo in this assembly. It is important—it is urgent that foreign diplomacy should know what it has to look to in this respect. By this means we shall avoid disagreeable intrigues, and destroy culpable hopes. Europe, when informed of our irrevocable purpose, will take heed how it objects. Ill-advised interference will but throw us into the arms of auxiliaries (alluding to France), who have no desire more ardent than to make common cause with us.”

“Our revolution,” said Mr. Nothomb, “has exposed us to three kinds of war—a European war, a civil war, and a war with Holland. The first, in the present state of Europe, is impossible ; the exclusion of the Nassaus will secure us from the second ; but it may entail the third. Come what will, the last is inevitable, and we ought not to fear it. The reign of a prince of Orange would be a counter-revolution. Sooner or later he would say to us, ‘I do not rule in virtue of the election of 1830, but by the treaties of 1815. I never freely renounced the rights of my house.’”

Such were the doctrines of the supporters of the proposition. Of its opponents, only two or three ventured to utter their sentiments, but not one spoke in favour of

the prince ; nay, more ; while they deprecated the motion, all united in declaring that the members of the Nassau family were utterly ineligible. The most remarkable of these speeches were those of Messrs. De Langhe, Gerlache, and Baillet, all three ex-members of the opposition in the States-General. " It is said," observed the first, " that the people impatiently desire to know what will be done in regard to the exclusion of the Nassaus. Every one speaks in the name of the people, and yet all speak differently. To whom must we listen, or whom believe ? For my part, I think that the great mass of the people, both in the provinces and capital, will confidently await the decision of their representatives. If there be agitation, it must be attributed to those who seek to excite their passions, and to sow distrust among them. People, as well as kings, have their flatterers. The sycophants of the one, like those of the other, have no other object in view than their own interest. Little does it matter to them whether or not the people be plunged into misery by cessation of work, which is the inevitable result of disorder. In lashing up a storm, they have no other object than to rise to the surface of the waves. I, however, am far from being favourable to the Prince of Orange ; and if I had to give my vote at this moment, it would not be for him. Not on account of the insults which have been heaped upon him, and which prove nothing, but because I do not think he possesses sufficient strength of character to govern us at the present moment ; and, above all, because a vast portion of the nation is so strongly opposed to him, that I should fear his presence would be the signal for civil war."

" I do not rise," exclaimed Mr. de Gerlache, " to insult the Nassaus ; they are unfortunate, and no longer here to defend themselves. It is not thus we were accustomed

to combat them.\* I have a hundred times predicted the rupture of the diplomatic and compulsory marriage between two people differing in origin, customs, language, interests, and religion. This monstrous alliance could not last long, unless supported by justice, tolerance, and pre-eminent ability. The monarch evinced none of these qualities. A radical vice existed in the very constitution, namely, in the inequality of representation. No majority was possible for us in the chambers, and, consequently, we had no means to constrain the sovereign, either to govern in accordance with the general interests, to select responsible and capable ministers, or to redress abuses, but by refusing to vote supplies. The king, born a Dutchman, surrounded by Dutchmen, only breathing Dutch sentiments, never made himself acquainted with the Belgic people. What was the result? Whilst we were constantly vanquished in the chambers, we conquered out of doors through the medium of the press. The powers having resolved that we should remain united to Holland, ought to have come to our assistance when we so loudly expressed our discontent. They refused; Belgium applied to the *ultima ratio*; she conquered, and irrevocably tore asunder the treaties that bound her to the house of Nassau. \* \* \* \* But why this extraordinary and extra-legal measure? You are victors—you have declared your independence; the Nassaus exist no longer for you but as strangers; they are morally dead. Would you pursue them beyond the grave? When the Convention proclaimed the deposition of the Bourbons, and the senate that of Napoleon, both were despoiled fugitives, while France still remained puissant

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\* In allusion to the opposition in the States-General, of which he had been a member.

and terrible in the eyes of her enemies. But the King of Holland retains the whole of his ancient territory, and part of yours ; and the alliance of his family with Prussia and Russia renders his influence still more formidable. Will not a tacit omission, a simple preterition, suffice ? You desire an express exclusion, absolute and perpetual, in the face of Europe. In short, you demand a solemn declaration of infamy and indignity ! This is a gratuitous, sanguinary insult, that may produce grievous mischief. Reflect well on it. I believe that I may boast of as much patriotism as any one else ; but I will not vote for resolutions involving such important consequences, by acclamation, as the majority of this chamber appears to be about to do at the present moment. Although little disposed, as you well know, to support the Nassaus, after well consulting my conscience and cool judgment, I shall oppose their perpetual exclusion."

The debates which commenced on the 23d were hurried to a conclusion on the following evening ; when the president rose, and addressed the house in the following words : " The number of members present is 189 ; of these 161 have voted for, and 28 against the proposition. Consequently, the National Congress, in the name of the Belgic people, declares that the Orange Nassau family are excluded in perpetuity from all power in Belgium." Thunders of applause re-echoed from the galleries, as Baron Surlet, with a voice betraying deep emotion, thus laconically pronounced the *fiat*, that at one blow tore asunder the only remaining link which connected the dynasty with the nation, and overturned the political edifice which had been raised at the expense of so much blood and treasure. The adopted child, the boast and glory of the great powers, was cast back on their hands a disjointed and mutilated carcass. A revision of the labours of the



Vienna congress was indispensable. Its errors were there to serve as a beacon. The Conference soon gave proof that it was resolved to take warning by the past.

It was natural to suppose that a question of this nature would open a field to violent personalities, and that the more exaggerated advocates of the measure would avail themselves of the opportunity to launch forth much bitterness against a family to which many bore direct hatred. But the language held on this occasion as far exceeded all ordinary bounds as the motives for coming to a hasty and premature decision were passionate and anomalous. The latter afford a curious portrait of the feverish and unwholesome mistrust of all foreign powers that swayed the minds of the representatives. The alleged cause for this precipitation was the arrival of Mr. Landsberg, furnished with instructions from the French cabinet, to obtain from the provisional government the adjournment of a measure that appeared calculated to embroil the great powers. Scarcely was the purport of the French diplomatist's mission made known to the deputies, than their jealousy and impatience of all foreign interference pronounced itself in the strongest manner. Mr. Landsberg's intercession for a simple adjournment was construed into a direct attempt to "impose" the Prince of Orange. Some deputies, who had declared Mr. Rodenbach's proposition to be premature, now agreed that it would be an act of weakness to recede; while its supporters, calling to aid those high-sounding phrases that were well adapted to excite passion within, and fermentation without the chamber, found fresh grounds for persisting, and exclaimed, that "national honour, and the very existence of the revolution, depended on their rejecting all foreign interposition."

Whether the French cabinet was sincere or not in the object it professed to have in view, matters little; but it is

evident that the negotiation was not only an utter failure, but that it produced results diametrically opposed to its avowed purport. Indeed, there are several points in this transaction that excite surprise. First, it is impossible to avoid asking, if remonstrance was deemed expedient, why was the mission retarded until the eleventh hour? Mr. Rodenbach's intended proposition, which had been already delayed several days, was known, or *ought* to have been known, to the French and British governments before the Duke of Wellington's resignation, on the 16th, and yet no diplomatic steps were taken until the question was already before the chambers; the public mind being then inflamed to the utmost pitch, adjournment was rendered extremely difficult, if not impracticable. Secondly, why did not the French cabinet exert its influence, not with the provisional government, but with Mr. Rodenbach himself? Not in a languid, supplicating tone, but with that firmness and tact which it well knows how to employ on critical occasions. Though inaccessible to corruption, Rodenbach was not blind to conviction; and had he been adroitly persuaded that the adjournment would be conducive to the interests of Belgium and France, and that it was no ways intended as a snare in favour of the Prince of Orange, against whose whole family he entertained an ancient and inveterate animosity, it is highly probable that he would not have persisted in his motion, as it were, *per fas et nefas*. But not a word was addressed to him, either by the diplomatists then at Brussels, or by any other person on their behalf, except by one or two Antwerp deputies, who dreaded lest the fiat of exclusion should be the signal of a renewed bombardment of their city.

It must farther be asked, why was the mission confided to a subaltern diplomatist, unknown and without influence? If the exertions of M. Bresson, aided by

those of Mr. Cartwright, were considered insufficient, why not select some personage of political or military eminence?—General Belliard, for instance, whose name and antecedents were a passport to all Belgic hearts, and would have given immense weight to his suggestions. The same remarks may be applied to the British cabinet, of whose sympathy for the Prince of Orange no one could doubt. The jealousy and distrust felt towards the Duke of Wellington's administration (for the Whigs had not fully entered into office until the question of exclusion was already under discussion) extended itself to their agent, and was increased by his being the secretary of the British envoy at the Hague. Besides, it does not appear that he evinced any striking address on this occasion. Confining himself to ordinary diplomatic formalities, he limited his remonstrances to those who were known partisans of the falling dynasty, and consequently required no persuasion. As to any efforts with the provisional government, they could be of little avail: for whatever power they may have enjoyed in the eyes of the nation, as a collective body, they had no individual influence in the chambers, and were moreover too sagacious and politic to risk their own popularity and power by openly obstructing the wishes of the majority.

These observations apply more to the means than to the results; for even admitting the general exclusion of the Nassau family to have been adjourned or avoided, the possibility of placing the Prince of Orange on the throne was highly problematical. Nay, had it been attempted, had his royal highness even been elected, it is probable that another detestable crime would have been added to those which already stain the history of nations. More than one regicide hand was ready to imbrue itself in his blood. He was foredoomed. Several young men had entered into a sanguinary pact

to assassinate him. There were some that did not disguise their intention ; that spoke of it openly ; and, boasting of it as a glorious act of patriotism, eagerly disputed the right of precedence. “ If ever they (the congress) elect the Prince of Orange,” exclaimed one of this association, “ my rifle, that rarely missed its aim, shall give a good account of him.”—“ If yours fail, I swear that mine shall not,” said a second.—“ And if both miss, I will poniard him,” added a third, “ though it be at the foot of the altar, or on the steps of the throne !”\*

That these and others would have attempted to execute their detestable menaces, there can be little doubt ; but even admitting that the odious crime of assassination were not perpetrated, it is indisputable that civil war would have broken out in almost every province. The prince could only have ascended the throne by wading through a river of blood ; or have continued to reign, save amidst a succession of riots, outbreaks, and with the perpetual fear of revolution. That his royal highness had the physical courage necessary to encounter these perils, is beyond all question ; but it is problematical whether he had the moral energy ; or the talents for government and administration requisite for so arduous a task. Such, at least, was the opinion of those on whom he must have relied for support ; who, even though they might have been satisfied as to his abilities, never could have overcome their distrust of his sincerity and independence. “ In accepting the Prince of Orange,” says Mr. Nothomb, “ the revolution would have retired before itself (*reculé devant elle-même*), and would have retrograded more and more every day.

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\* This conversation took place on Sunday, the 23d of January, in the salon of a public restaurateur at Brussels, and in the presence of twenty persons.

The thought of *conquest* would not have been destroyed; there would only have been a shadow of independence. The prince, at first starting, would have been a rebel associated with rebels; then, an intermediary personage; and he would have terminated by again becoming the first subject of his father. As King of the Belgians, the Prince of Orange would have been the Monck of William I.\*

But there were other collateral causes that led to this great consummation of the revolution. The maxims of the Holy Alliance, from which England inwardly dissented, even under Lord Castlereagh's administration, and which she had openly repudiated under that of Mr. Canning, could not be resuscitated, or ever again form the basis of British policy; and British foreign policy might fairly be taken as the index of that of all the great northern powers. For, without her concurrence, her subsidies—nay, her very permission, none dared move, however much they might menace, unless under the penalty of seeing their fleets swept from the face of the waters, and their thrones shaken to their very foundation. Thus, when the Belgians discovered that England was no longer disposed to support an edifice, whose elevation had been the constant object of her struggles and sacrifices during ages, and that the other great powers, borne away by the same overwhelming impulsion, were prepared to acknowledge the vices of treaties, of which they had hitherto boasted as masterpieces of diplomatic excellence, they became the more emboldened, and determined, by one vigorous effort, to confront all the perils of the storm, or to reap all the advantages of the calm.

The position of the Conference at this moment was

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\* “Essai sur la Revolution Belge,” page 52.

critical beyond all precedent. The path lay over a bridge, narrow as that of Al Serat. On both sides was the unfathomable abyss of war; at the extremity, the elysium of peace. The slightest error might plunge it into the first; the second could only be attained by the development of extraordinary skill and moderation. A general conflagration would have been the infallible result of armed intervention, and even of menacing remonstrance; whilst mediation, however skilfully handled, and moderation, however sincerely persevered in, were not without their perils. For this negotiation was a Proteus-like question, susceptible of a thousand transformations, and of being enlarged or contracted at the will of any one of the parties; a question easily productive of stormy discussion, and very difficult to retain within tranquil bounds. Mediation is, indeed, twin brother to intervention; and there was something in the latter so offensive, so irritating to public opinion, that it required no ordinary ability to prevent the one from being confounded with the other. Had this been the case, war would have been inevitable.

An eminent orator in the French chambers has so well depicted the political position of Europe at this period, that one cannot do better than terminate this chapter by an extract from his speech, more especially as his observations are essentially applicable to the present state of affairs.\*

After developing the principal causes calculated to produce explosion, the speaker proceeds thus: "Among the chances of peace, I will place, in the first rank, the influence of the progress of public reason over the policy of cabinets; the esteem of Europe for the frank

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\* Speech of M. Bignon in the French Chamber on the 15th November, 1830, on the question of French foreign policy.

character of Louis Philippe, who, in respecting the independence of foreign states, knows how to inspire respect for our own; and the perspective of the imminent perils that war might entail on absolute governments.

“To the foregoing chances must be added some other circumstances favourable to general peace. First, the impoverished financial condition of almost all states, not even excepting England, who, though she may have abundant resources for her own wants, can, at all events, no longer furnish to other powers those subsidies that she lavished on them between 1798 and 1815; and secondly, the extinction of ancient national animosities, especially between France and Great Britain, the sympathy of divers people one for the other, and the yearnings of all for those principles of just liberty that are now so well understood in France.

“If the vanity of political calculations, and the uncertainty of human previsions were ever demonstrated, it is by the events that have recently occurred in the Low Countries. For many ages it has been an established political axiom in London, that Great Britain would be menaced with destruction on the day that the French territory should receive the slightest extension on the side of Belgium. Thence, those long and bloody wars, the principal object of which was the formation of a barrier against France. Thence, those famous barrier treaties, which, in leaving to the house of Austria the unprofitable dominion of Brabant, delivered over her fortresses to Dutch garrisons.\*

“In vain did the revolutionary wars disannul these treaties; England never for a moment renounced the hope of reviving them. During twenty-five years it was

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\* Barrier Treaty, 1715.

for Belgium that she fought. During the brightest days of Napoleon's dominion, she constantly pursued the idea of detaching Belgium from his empire. This thought was the main-spring of the coalitions she fomented and subsidised. In 1815, she obtained complete success. She prepared and consummated the agglomeration of Belgium and Holland under one chief. She formed of these two countries a compact mass, for the profit of the house of Orange.\* It was not only Dutch troops that she established in the fortresses belonging to another sovereign, but the Dutch Stadtholder, having become king, was made possessor and guardian. The produce of the war contribution raised (by England) in France, was employed in bristling the French frontier with fortresses deemed impregnable. The general-in-chief of the victorious coalition presided in person at their construction, and regarded the re-establishment of the ancient (barrier) system, with the recompence attached to it, as the noblest fruit of his triumphs.

“Suddenly a combat takes place between the king and his subjects; the separation of Holland and Belgium is effected; the fortresses that the Dutch ought to have preserved, instantly fell into the hands of the Belgians. Adieu to the mighty edifice of ages, the great work of England, so dearly paid for by torrents of blood, and by a debt of eight hundred millions sterling! *All would have to be redone were a similar enterprise to be attempted.* No! England cannot conceive so insane

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\* It would here have been more correct to have said, “*by which the house of Orange profited* ;” for the object was not the aggrandizement of that house, but the re-establishment of the barrier. The next phrase is equally erroneous; the fortresses did not belong to another sovereign, for the same treaty that established the kingdom also proclaimed the renunciation of the Emperor of Austria's rights to his Belgic dominions.



a project. She cannot desire absurdities, nor aim at impossibilities. At the moment that an immense debt overwhelms her, a debt in a great measure accumulated by her efforts to construct an artificial barrier, which has crumbled away in a few days, will her ministers think of doubling that debt, by abandoning themselves to the pursuit of similar chimeras? Even supposing that no material obstacle intervened, one has every right to calculate on the progress of reason in the British cabinet.

“Independent of the constitutional spirit of the French nation, Europe has another guarantee for peace, in the straightforward and loyal character of Louis Philippe. In fact, suppose that in the place of the prudent monarch who now governs us, the July revolution had produced a republic; or that it had placed on the throne a prince, or a fortunate soldier, more intent on his own grandeur than on the happiness of France; what would have prevented the bold chief of a republic or monarchy, on the day that the tocsin of war sounded in Belgium, from precipitating himself into that country at the head of an army, and proclaiming *universal liberty*? What could have prevented our armies from pouring into the Rhenan provinces (once French departments), and there exciting or seconding the movement of the people against their present sovereigns, by promising them free constitutions? Certainly this step might have subjected France to fearful risks, but fortune often favours the bold. Thus if she had been impelled by an adventurous chief in the path of conquest, and had re-seized a territory close at hand, a territory which would have hastened to re-unite itself to her, she might now perhaps be in a condition to brave the united efforts of Europe, behind her triple rampart of the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees?

“In the situation in which all the continental powers,

and even England, stand in regard to Louis Philippe (the destruction of whose new dynasty would be a calamity for all others in Europe), is it probable that they will decide for war? The soldiers of our days are no longer mere automatons, even in those countries the least advanced in civilization. From henceforth the passions and moral affections of the people must essentially influence the events of war. Old prejudices have vanished; national prepossessions are extinguished. The English of to-day, for instance, are no longer those of Mr. Pitt or Lord Castlereagh; and, on the other hand, the French have abjured the rancours of the Convention and the empire. Everywhere men date from more recent epochs. There are English, French, and German patriots, but the love of one's own country no longer consists in hatred for foreign states."\*

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\* Lord Palmerston thus expressed himself in the House of Commons on the 17th of March, 1834, on the same subject:—"The relations existing between France and England are more amicable than ever. The friendship between the two countries has augmented in proportion as the two governments have learned to know each other, and have evinced a reciprocal confidence, founded on mutual loyalty and good faith." No stronger proof of the justice of M. Bignon's provisions could be adduced, nor could Lord Palmerston advance any assertion more honourable to himself and his colleagues; for this good intelligence between the two countries is the key-stone of peace. Sir R. Peel has still more recently acknowledged the importance of this great truth.

## CHAPTER IV.

LORD PONSONBY ARRIVES AT BRUSSELS—DIFFICULTIES OF HIS SITUATION AND THAT OF M. BRESSON—CHARACTER AND POSITION OF THE ORANGISTS—MANIFESTO OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE—POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN—LORD ABERDEEN'S SPEECH ON THE BELGIC QUESTION—MESSRS. VAN DE WEYER AND VILLAIN XIV. DESPATCHED TO ENGLAND; THEY RETURN AFTER ADDRESSING AN ENERGETIC MEMOIR TO THE CONFERENCE—PROTOCOLS NOS. 11 AND 12—THE FRENCH CABINET REFUSES ITS RATIFICATION—EMBARRASMENTS CREATED BY COUNT SEBASTIANI'S CONDUCT—THE BELGIANS REJECT THE PROTOCOLS OF THE 20TH AND 27TH OF JANUARY—THE INJUSTICE OF THE LATTER AS REGARDED BELGIUM—PROTOCOL OF THE 19TH OF FEBRUARY—FRANCE ADHERES TO THE PROTOCOLS—GENERAL DIPLOMATIC CONSIDERATIONS—M. BRESSON RECALLED.

THE change of administration in England, without bringing with it any immediate or apparent alteration in British foreign policy, produced a moral effect on the Continent, most essentially favourable to the maintenance of general repose, and in no country more so than in Belgium, which had now become the axis on which revolved the paramount questions of peace and war. Participating in the prejudices of their French neighbours against the Duke of Wellington, prejudices for the most part originating in that great soldier's immortal triumphs; overjoyed at his retreat, and above all, in that of Lord Aberdeen, whom they looked on not only as a prejudiced partisan of the Netherlands government, but as essentially hostile to the diffusion of liberal principles abroad, as he was adverse to reform at home, the Belgians were the more ready to enter the

path of moderation and negotiation, when they found that the exclusion of the Nassaus, in lieu of producing unfavourable results, had operated to their advantage.

For the Conference, instead of breaking off diplomatic relations, redoubled its labours, and almost immediately despatched Lord Ponsonby to replace Mr. Cartwright, who was accredited to the German Diet, as a reward for the zeal with which he had fulfilled his instructions at Brussels. And certainly, if the most unremitting endeavours to maintain that good understanding with his colleague, which was so requisite to the success of their mission, merited recompence, no one was better entitled to it than Mr. Cartwright. Indeed, it was not one of the least anomalous events of this period, to find a British and a French diplomatist dwelling under the same roof, acting under the same instructions, and simultaneously exerting themselves in the same pacific cause; and this on the very arena where their countrymen had never before met but for purposes of hostility, and with the deadly rancour of implacable rivals!

The appointment of Lord Ponsonby, who, attended by Mr. Abercrombie, reached Brussels on the 5th of December, was hailed with general satisfaction. His liberal antecedents, his rank as a peer of Great Britain, and his connexion with Lord Grey, were regarded as favourable omens prior to his arrival; while his prepossessing countenance, his noble and courtly bearing, his perfect self-possession, and the affability of his manners, produced the best effects, as soon as he was introduced to the provisional government and other influential persons. It was well that his lordship possessed these and other advantages, for the annals of diplomacy scarcely furnish an instance of greater difficulty and delicacy than the position in which the commissioners of the Conference were placed at Brussels. Such, at least, was the light in which the mission was regarded, both by

Prince Talleyrand and Lord Palmerston—no mean judges of its intricacies and complications.

Though apparently pursuing the same object, and acting from one sole impulse, Lord Ponsonby and M. Bresson had, as it were, to serve two different masters, and thus to perform duties frequently of a nature so opposed to each other, as to require consummate tact, temper, and discretion, to prevent misunderstanding either between themselves or their governments. On the one hand, the French envoy had to reconcile the interests of France with those of Europe, and to execute the injunctions openly imposed on him by the Conference, without either irritating the feverish susceptibilities of the French people, or acting in opposition to the latent desires of the French Cabinet. He had to unite with the British commissioner in carrying into effect the common instructions received from London, and yet to abstract himself from his colleague, in order to perform contradictory commands emanating direct from Paris. He had to obey Prince Talleyrand, without contradicting General Sebastiani; and yet the views of the French foreign minister were oftentimes at variance with those of the Nestor of diplomacy.\* He had moreover to sacrifice his natural prejudices and vows for the aggrandizement of France, and to turn a deaf ear to the temptations and seductions that were constantly pressed upon him. For whilst the Orangists spared no exertions to circumvent and mislead his colleague, the movement party and the re-unionists were no less active in endeavouring to induce M. Bresson to lend himself to their views.

On the other hand, Lord Ponsonby, enchained by circumscribed instructions, had to combat the predomi-

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\* A striking instance of this is afforded by Count Sebastiani's refusal to ratify the signature of Prince Talleyrand to the twelfth protocol.

nance of French influence, and yet to support his French colleague. He had to counteract the machinations of the movement party, and yet to advocate liberal principles. He had to neutralize the effect of the vote of exclusion, by endeavouring to bring round the popular voice to a member of the repudiated dynasty, and yet to avoid any measure that might excite the passions of the Belgic people. He had to conciliate the interests of the northern powers without giving offence to France, and to propitiate the latter, without giving umbrage to the former. He had to establish British influence where there was an anti-British feeling, and to restore tranquillity by the very means calculated to produce civil war—that is, by attempting to turn the tide of national sympathy in favour of a branch of the Nassaus, and this against the secret agency of France; in despite of the open opposition of the great mass of the Belgians, and, what is more extraordinary, in defiance of the positive declarations of the king of the Netherlands; who, in lieu of being prepared to support or acknowledge his son as a sovereign, did not scruple to assert, “*that he would rather see De Potter placed on the throne than the Prince of Orange.*” The task imposed on Lord Ponsonby was Augean, and, as far as concerned the Prince of Orange, utterly impracticable; a fact unfortunately not discovered until much valuable time had been thrown away, in this illusory project.

Without pretending to draw aside the veil that enveloped the policy of the great powers, or to explain the motives that actuated their proceedings at this juncture, a few words are necessary in order to point out the real position of the case, as regarded their general connexion with the Prince of Orange. This is the more essential as concerns England, for not only has the conduct and intentions of the British cabinet been completely misunderstood and misrepresented, but the foulest and most unwarrant-

able calumnies have been heaped on those whose only fault consisted in having faithfully executed the orders of their government, and perhaps in having too long trusted to the assertions of a party who, to serve their own views, would not have scrupled to plunge their country and all Europe into a bloody and interminable war. These accusations issued from two sources, which, though antipodes one to the other, seem to have approximated for the purpose of calumny and misrepresentation. The one were the Orangists, who were desirous to saddle all the odium of their own want of talent, courage, and unity, on those whom they had too long succeeded in duping, —and the other were the movement party, whose hearts were filled with rancour at the successful opposition that was made to their efforts to produce anarchy.

That it was the earnest desire of Great Britain and the northern powers to see the prince of Orange called to the Belgic throne, does not admit of a shadow of doubt ; that is, so far as this could be effected without compromising the harmony that existed between France and the other cabinets, or without producing any violent convulsion in Belgium that might lead to a renewal of anarchy and bloodshed. That instructions to this effect were issued to the British commissioners, is as certain as that the Prince of Orange's tranquil election would have been hailed with general satisfaction, and would have been followed by the instant recognition of all European sovereigns. But under existing circumstances, and more especially under the limited circle within which each power had circumscribed its co-operation, the attempt was chimerical.

In the first place, though France did not openly dissent, she was essentially adverse to the return of any of the deposed dynasty ; not only on the ground of its being a dangerous example to her own Carlists,

but from her entertaining other views in regard to Belgium; that is, from her still cherishing a hope that England might be induced to listen to a partition. Secondly, anxious as Great Britain might have been for the success of the Prince of Orange, she had determined to confine her good offices to mere *semi-official intercession*, and to decline all other assistance or intervention, whether in the shape of subsidy, or even of *official remonstrance*; a system rigidly adhered to from first to last. Thirdly, though the other powers may have furnished some private pecuniary succour, they were equally resolved to avoid all overt interference, and to leave the issue of the prince's cause to his own energy and the exertions of his partisans. Besides, the bursting forth of the Polish revolution on the 29th of November, intelligence of which reached St. Petersburg before that of the exclusion of the Nassaus, utterly precluded the emperor from affording any assistance to his brother-in-law. Indeed, the immense influence which this event had over the negotiations was not long in disclosing itself. The Belgians were not backward in availing themselves of this favourable conjuncture of circumstances, which thus completely neutralized the hostility of their most dangerous adversary.

Of the strength and real resources of what was termed the Orange party in Belgium, the most erroneous impressions every where existed; even the prince himself appears to have been as much deceived up to the last moment, as he had been at Antwerp in the commencement of October. Either from ignorance, want of candour, or false policy, his agents and partisans constantly over-rated their own powers, whilst they under-valued those of their opponents; and not only buoyed themselves up with false hopes, but utterly misled others as to their chances of success. Thus Mr. Cartwright left



Brussels knowing little of the real state of the case ; and Lord Ponsonby had no sooner arrived, than the same efforts were exerted to delude him as had been successfully employed in mystifying his predecessor.

To arrive at the truth was in fact extremely difficult, nor could it be effected but by the aid of time. In the first place, almost all those persons who sought access to the British commissary boldly affirmed that the Orangists were so numerous and powerful, that money and the mere countenance of the great powers were alone required to produce a general movement in the prince's favour. And yet, they must have been well aware not only of the conspiracy formed against his royal highness's life, but that preparations were concluded in many of the large provincial towns for hoisting the French tri-colour, should any attempt be made on the part of the Conference to impose the prince upon them. The army, the high aristocracy, both hereditary and commercial, as well as the burgher-guards, were said to be devoted to his cause. But, when the moment of action arrived, scarcely a single officer or soldier could be induced to move, with the exception of Baron Van der Smissen, who, having risen from the rank of major to that of major-general by the revolution ; first abandoned the king, and then deserted his country, and who, with three or four others, either stipulated for the confirmation of their rank, or for further advancement. The aristocracy, however much attached to the prince, were not inclined to hazard their lives or fortunes ; and the burgher-guards were as little disposed to place themselves in collision with the people, as they had been when Prince Frederick trusted to their support in the month of September.

It was confidently asserted, that, notwithstanding the recent decree of congress, his royal highness had a

strong party in the chambers, willing and desirous to propose the revocation of the act of exclusion; when, in fact, not one of the Orange deputies, with the exception of the venerable Maclagan of Ostend, had the courage to express their sentiments, much less to advocate a measure that would probably have entailed proscription and pillage on the whole. Indeed, the Marquis de Trazegnies, with other influential Orangists, in lieu of shewing any disposition to support the prince's cause, withdrew from congress, and limited their assistance to the concoction of still-born conspiracies and empty discussions within their own saloons. There, indeed, they were no ways of sparing their maledictions of the revolution and expressions of attachment to the prince. There they made vigorous speeches, destined to die away among the echoes of their own halls. There they uttered vows of eternal fidelity to the Nassaus; yet many would have preferred a return to that union with France, which they hoped would restore to them—not the Prince of Orange—but the places which they once held at the French court. There, they called for supplies of money, but would not unlock their own coffers. There they invoked bloodshed, with a determination not to spill a drop of their own. There, they eulogized the Emperor of Russia, because he had carried proscription and death into the heart of unhappy Poland; and with parricidal vows, earnestly longed for similar calamities to befall their own country,—no matter whether inflicted by Calmucs or Dutch. Within this, their limited circle, they cursed the British government and its agent; because the one had at length discovered the fallacy of their assertions, and the other would not embroil themselves and all Europe in war, in order to revive a system of policy which the progress of reason had shown to be incompatible with the interests of Great Britain.

Liege, Ghent, and Antwerp were, by the same fallacious reporters, declared to be in readiness to proclaim the son of their late sovereign ; and yet, the only proofs that could be adduced of any intention of active co-operation in those places were a few passive petitions. Plans of operation and pecuniary demands were certainly not wanting ; but the first were drawn up without combination or regard, either to local facts or general circumstances ; and the latter, when granted, were lavished on men of disreputable character and broken fortunes, who had no other influence or power over the people than the mere example of their courage. And, even of these, Lieutenant-colonel Gregoire was the only one who gave proofs of a willingness to repay in his person that which he had received in his purse. Beyond this, there was neither *unity, force, prudence, or true devotion*. All were ready to urge *others* forward ; scarcely *one* was prepared to expose *himself*. All were desirous to profit by successful results ; but few were inclined to encounter dubious chances.

On the other hand, whilst the press redoubled its hostility to the ex-dynasty, the National Association—active, energetic, and relentless—had obtained such complete command over the populace, that a breath from them sufficed to reduce to ashes the abode of any person suspected of Orangism ; nay, even the sacred character of the British envoy could not screen his habitation from insult, nor protect those who were in immediate relation with him from domiciliary visits and the seizure of their papers.

If there was a deficiency in the Orangist party of every essential requisite to the success of so difficult an enterprise as the restoring any branch of that family, there was a no less striking defect in the counsels and conduct of the prince himself. His departure for

England was essentially ill-advised. If it was considered prudent for him to quit Holland, and thus to detach himself from all apparent contact with his father's cabinet, any place would have been preferable to London, none more appropriate than France or the Rhenan provinces. If he expected to be joined by the army of the Meuse, with which he had certainly established partial relations, he should have decided for the latter ; and thence, boldly throwing himself into the province of Limbourg, have tried the effect of his presence on the people. If he trusted to a sympathetic rising in Ghent, he should have selected Paris or Lille ; whence he might suddenly have shown himself in the Flanders ; and, although his life had been placed in jeopardy, have thus put those to the test who had made such lavish professions of their attachment, and shamed them into activity by his example. In either case, he would have been at hand to profit by circumstances, and to direct and animate the exertions that were making in his favour. His vicinity would have facilitated communications, and would have given courage to his partisans. His manifesto of the 11th of January, 1831, which produced results contrary to those anticipated by his partisans, would have been more effectual had it been dated from any other place than London ; for so jealous were the Belgians of British influence that they determined to send a deputation to Paris, to consult the King of France as to the choice of "*a chief of the State*," whilst they declined holding any communication with the British government on the same subject.\*

By residing in France he would have had the appearance of being supported by that country, and not

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\* See Appendix, No. 27.

of acting under the control of the Conference, or rather of the Duke of Wellington ; an impression that increased the suspicions of his opponents, and operated strongly to his disadvantage. Above all, he would not then have incurred the censure of wasting his time in the lap of ease and idleness, while the great game of monarchy was at stake, nor have brought on himself the accusation of diverting himself with frivolous amusements, while his partisans, who so much needed a leader and rallying point, were abandoned to their own impulses, and left to encounter death or proscription.

The question, however, as far as it regards Great Britain, reduces itself to the narrowest and most simple compass. On this, as on all subsequent occasions, during the progress of the Batavo-Belgic negotiation, the British cabinet and its agents acted in a manly, straightforward, and candid manner towards all parties. The sympathies of the English for the Prince of Orange never were concealed ; indeed they were candidly avowed by Lord Grey in the House of Lords. But these sympathies were not only made subservient, from first to last, to the maintenance of a good understanding between all the great powers, but were never intended to be demonstrated in defiance of the Belgic national will. So long as the Orangists succeeded in deluding the English government with assurances that the Prince of Orange was certain of being called to the throne, by such an overwhelming majority of the nation as would not only preclude civil war at the moment, but offer guarantees for future stability, so long was that government inclined to encourage the project. But it never entered into the plan of the cabinet to *impose* the object of their predilection, or to bring him back into Belgium as an apple of intestine discord. Still less

was it intended to countenance this or any other speculation that would have driven the Belgians into the arms of France, and thus engendered that general war which England had determined to avoid, at the sacrifice of the long-cherished political axioms of her statesmen, the dearest affections of the crown, and the sympathies of a vast majority of her people, and above all, of her army and navy.

Political ties may easily be riven asunder, and it is well that a renovated policy at length prevailed over those ancient and ruinous doctrines, which, while they filled the cup of British glory to the very brim, had drained the pockets of the people almost to the last drops. But individual sympathies are not so easily rooted out. Thence the abandonment of the Prince of Orange's cause was painful to almost every person, whether in or out of office in England, and was not rendered less galling from its being the result of a paramount duty. Great Britain had to choose between that prince with a general war, or the continuance of peace without him. Had the alternative been put to the vote in the British senate, it would probably have been carried without a division.

Indeed, nothing can present a more striking proof of the enlightened wisdom of Lord Grey's foreign policy, and the skill with which Lord Palmerston conducted the whole of these difficult negotiations, than the triumphant manner in which the question as regarded the Netherlands has always been met in both houses of parliament. This is the more remarkable, from the triumph being the fruit of conviction over those deep-rooted sympathies, and party prejudices, which so strongly developed themselves in the arguments of the opposition. Even Lord Aberdeen himself was compelled to acknowledge "*the indispensable necessity of*

*an administrative separation ;*" a remarkable admission, which implicitly tended to condemn the treaty of Vienna, and to stigmatize the government of the King of the Netherlands. For it is notorious that this necessity for separation arose wholly and solely from the defects of the one, and the impolicy of the other. The marriage between Belgium and Holland ought never to have been contracted ; but, as it had taken place, the divorce might have been avoided, had the king pursued a system less exclusively Dutch, or acted more fully in accordance with the spirit of treaties, and the intentions of the great powers.

The animosity or opposition of the Belgians before the revolution—nay, even at the moment of the Prince of Orange's entry—was as little anti-dynastic as Orangism at a subsequent period has been dynastic. In both instances the dynasty must be considered as an accessory, not a cause. Had the dynasty not identified itself with obnoxious acts of oppression and flagrant partiality, it never would have lost its hold on the hearts of the people. Were Belgium now restored to the same commercial advantages that it enjoyed during the union, there would be no Orangism. For, in fact, *Orangism is a mere commercial question*; a question of interest, totally distinct from policy, patriotism, or personal sympathy. It is in this that it essentially differs both from the Carlism of France and Spain, and the Miguelism of Portugal. In these latter countries, there is a degree of self-abnegation and chivalrous devotion in the conduct of the legitimists that ennobles their cause ; but in Belgium, it is a mere matter of aristocratical pride, of commercial speculation, and of arithmetical calculation, divested of anything that is dignified or disinterested. Braving exile, proscription, confiscation, and death, from pure attachment to ancient

predilections, the Carlists of France and the Peninsula have some claim to the respect even of their immediate enemies; but in Belgium scarcely a single instance can be advanced of an Orangist having made a single *voluntary* sacrifice, or having courted the slightest danger or risk, in support of the avowed object of his affections.\*

When Lord Aberdeen, in his memorable speech of the 22d of January, 1832, reproached Lord Grey with being the sole author of Belgic independence, he was in some measure unjust to himself; for, in the first place, the two first protocols were ratified by the former upwards of a month after the Belgians had proclaimed their independence; and, secondly, it is evident that these protocols were the foundation on which were based all the subsequent negotiations that led, not to the "*indispensable separation*," for that was already consummated, but to the consolidation of Belgic nationality. It was Lord Aberdeen who first dispatched a British commissioner to negotiate with the existing Belgic government, not on the footing of "revolted subjects," but on that of an independent nation; implicitly, if not directly, admitting their right to sign conventions, and treating them as a power co-equal with Holland. It is true that this step was taken with a view of rescuing the latter from the danger that menaced it, and with the still more laudable intention of averting the calamities of war. So desirous was his lordship to effect this important object, that he even signed the

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\* Baron Van der Smissen may be adduced as an exception to this remark; but even he might return with impunity, and would in all probability be restored to his rank. The case of Borremans may also be cited: but he also was soon liberated, and has returned to the position in society in which he was found at the revolution, and from which neither his talents or antecedents ever entitled him to emerge.



second protocol the day after he had quitted office ; an anomaly to which he alluded in his speech in the following terms : “ The first duty of the Conference was to endeavour to establish peace, by effecting a cessation of hostilities between Holland and her revolted provinces. The second object with which the British government was bound to occupy itself, was the signature of a protocol to that effect. I signed it, therefore, on the day after I resigned the seals confided to my charge ; a step which I decided upon from my extreme anxiety to arrange this affair.” But the purport in no way deducted from the consequences ; and of these consequences Lord Aberdeen has no cause to be ashamed ; unless, indeed, he blushed at having largely contributed to save Great Britain and Europe from a sanguinary war.

Although it is in no way intended to deprive Lord Grey and his colleagues of the honour of having completed a work which, according to the opinions of all unprejudiced European politicians, was essential to the maintenance of peace—a work, without which, anarchy and general war were inevitable—yet, when the consolidation of Belgic independence, which was the vehicle by which this delicate and difficult operation was effected, is thrown forward as a reproach, it is proper that those who put the first hand to the work should bear their share of the onus of creation. If the simile may be permitted, Lord Aberdeen laid down the railway ; Lord Grey supplied and put in action the locomotive engines.

The armistice certainly secured Holland from great hazards, but it likewise anticipated the *casus fœderis* on the part of Prussia, and thence directly paved the road to Belgic independence. The opinions of the veteran and enlightened diplomatists whose names are

affixed to the protocols, under the sanction of the most illustrious and eminent statesmen and monarchs of Europe; the very essence of these protocols, which breathe throughout a noble spirit of peace and conciliation, and the most elevated policy, are proofs, that if Lord Grey was the author of Belgic independence, he was not only a benefactor to that country, but to all Europe. For Belgic independence and European peace were synonymous. The one could not be denied without endangering the other. In fact, the conservation of the latter was as intimately linked with the consolidation of the former, as the life of one of the Siamese twins with the co-existence of his brother.

Had it been possible to reduce France at one blow to the condition in which she was placed subsequent to the battle of Waterloo, or even to have filled Belgium with foreign bayonets, as was the case prior to that glorious event, then the possibility of a different policy was comprehensible. The same power that placed the King of the Netherlands on the united throne, might have maintained him at the head of the two countries whose disunion was admitted to be “indispensable;” but that any British statesman should advance so dangerous a theory as the possibility of a restoration, or a continuance of *dynastic* connexion, after the events of Brussels and Antwerp, is an inconceivable infatuation, showing a very imperfect knowledge of the real state of public opinion both in Belgium and France. “It was to forget that the refusal to recognize Belgic independence, in the then state of popular feeling, would have entailed the French occupation of these provinces, and rekindled a fresh war of twenty years, in which England must inevitably have been involved.”\*

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\* “Lettre à Lord Aberdeen, par Victor de la Marre;” a pamphlet attributed to Mr. Van de Weyer, and ably refuting the argu-

The exclusion of the Nassaus, as previously observed, was followed by redoubled diplomatic exertions on the part of the Conference, which was not long ere it came to the important resolution developed in the protocol of the 20th of December (No. 7), wherein it frankly acknowledged the vices of the treaty of Vienna, and the necessity of establishing the independence of Belgium. In consequence of this, the provisional government was requested to dispatch commissioners to London, "furnished with full powers to consult, explain, and facilitate the definitive adoption of the new arrangements." By this step the Belgians were admitted to a share in the negotiations; and their agents, without being overtly received as envoys from an acknowledged government, were nevertheless indirectly placed on the same footing, in respect to the Conference, as the Netherlands ambassador. But Messrs. Van de Weyer and H. Villain XIV.,\* who were charged with this mission, having received instructions to lay claim to the possession of the whole of the left bank of the Scheldt, Luxembourg (saving its relations with the Germanic Diet), and Limbourg, including Maestricht, these inadmissible pretensions were instantly rejected by the Conference, and the two commissioners returned to Brussels—not, however, without addressing an energetic note to Lord Palmerston, touching the free navigation of the Scheldt, which the Netherlands government continued to obstruct up to the end of January.

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ments advanced by Lord Aberdeen in his speech of the 22d of January, 1832.

\* The singular title of this family is said to have arisen from a request of one of their progenitors, who, on being ennobled by Louis XIV., demanded as a boon that the king would permit him and his heirs to assume, as an addition to their name, the cypher attached to that of his majesty.

“War is imminent,” says the penultimate paragraph of this document; “if it breaks out, if neighbouring states and other European countries suffer from its counteraction, the fault will rest with the monarch who will have provoked a patient and generous nation—but a nation too proud to allow that the just and reasonable deference, which it has consented to show to the sovereigns who have offered a benevolent mediation, should be mistaken for a symptom of weakness.”

Independent of a mass of notes, explanations, and protestations, eight protocols saw the light before the termination of 1830. Five more were produced during the month of January, 1831, of which those of the 20th and 27th (Nos. 11 and 12) were the most remarkable. The first of these, which may be looked upon as the arch on which all subsequent treaties were founded, contained seven articles, which the plenipotentiaries had determined upon as the basis for the territorial limits intended to separate Belgium from Holland, and which further announced the intention of erecting the former into a “perpetually neutral state.”\* The second was principally confined to financial arrangements, by which it was “*proposed*” to saddle Belgium with  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the whole of the debt inscribed in the great book of the Netherlands government; the interest of which debt, at two and a half per cent., amounted to more than twenty-seven millions† In consideration of which,

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\* See Appendix, No. 23.

† According to the note B annexed to the 48th protocol, the following is the exact amount of the Netherlands public debt on the 1st of October, 1831 :—Interest of debt at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. 19,272,275 fl. ; of which 167,806,836 of capital, forming 4,195,145 of annual interest, had been incurred during the union; independent of this were the following items :—Sinking fund syndicate, at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., 4,950,000 : obligations, at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., 1,050,000 ; sinking fund, 2,500,000 ; giving a total of 27,772,000 florins.

Belgium was to be admitted to a free intercourse with the Dutch colonies, on the same footing, and with the same rights and privileges, as the people of Holland. It was also determined that Antwerp should continue to be a mere commercial port, as stipulated by the 15th section of the treaty of Paris, and that the whole of the articles of the 11th and 12th protocols, should be embodied in one category, forming a species of preliminary convention, under the title of “*Basis destined to establish the independence and future existence of Belgium.*”

The two last paragraphs of this important document are too remarkable to be omitted. For they afford convincing proofs of the honourable intentions of the five powers, and of their resolution to sacrifice all secondary considerations to the preservation of European tranquillity. “Intent on maintaining general peace,” say the plenipotentiaries, “persuaded that unanimity is its only guarantee, and acting with perfect disinterestedness in the Belgian affairs, the grand object of the five great powers has been to assign to her (Belgium) an inoffensive position in the European system, and to offer her an existence that may secure both her own welfare, and the safety of other states. They do not hesitate, therefore, to assume to themselves the right of advancing these principles; and without prejudicing other grave questions, without deciding any thing as to that of the Belgic sovereignty, it behoves them to declare, that, in their opinion, the sovereign of that country must necessarily answer to the principles of existence of the country itself—satisfy by his personal position the safety of neighbouring states—accept for this purpose the arrangements consigned in the present protocol, and occupy a station to insure their tranquil enjoyment to Belgium.”

But the pacific views of the Conference had like to

have been frustrated by two incidents immediately resulting from the promulgation of the above-mentioned basis. The conditions, especially as concerned the limits and the debt, excited the utmost clamour in Belgium. The congress, on the 1st of February, solemnly protested against the 11th protocol ; and the diplomatic committee, representing the ministry for foreign affairs, returned to Lord Ponsonby the 12th and 13th, accompanied by a note dated the 22nd of February, declaring that these documents were tainted with undue partiality ; that they were a violation of the principle of non-intervention, and a complete departure from that principle of simple mediation which had been the avowed object of the Conference ; and further, denying the right of the latter to final arbitration. This proceeding not only shewed the determined spirit that animated the Belgic government, but that it was fully alive to, and resolved to avail itself of, the favourable nature of collateral circumstances, which, if they did not empower it to dictate its own conditions, nevertheless enabled it, by the mere threat of exciting general war, to hold the Conference at bay, and thus to give a new turn to the conclusion that had been too hastily predetermined by the great powers.

This contrariety had been preceded, and was perhaps caused by another circumstance, totally unexpected both by Prince Talleyrand and his coadjutors, and which served to complicate the negotiations, and to endanger the perfect good understanding that had hitherto existed between the great powers. To the surprise of all Europe, the French cabinet, which had adhered to the protocol of the 20th January, declined to ratify that of the 27th ; thereby not only annulling the act of its own plenipotentiary, and encouraging the Belgians to renewed opposition and a continuance in a system of diplomacy

exclusively French, but rendering the position of the agents of the conference at Brussels extremely embarrassing, and perhaps laying the foundation of that want of cordiality that subsequently arose between them at the period of the election of the Duke of Nemours. A misintelligence in no way to be attributed to a want of discretion or tact on the part of either of these diplomats, but to the contradictory nature of the instructions forwarded to M. Bresson, who appeared to be the victim of a mystification practised on him by his own foreign minister.\*

This unlooked-for resolution of the French cabinet was conveyed to M. Bresson by a dispatch from Count Sebastiani, dated the 1st of February, which, while it directed him not to take any share in presenting the protocol in question, contained the memorable passage so justly criticised and so often quoted by the Dutch, when the French government subsequently proceeded to acts of open intervention: "The Conference of London is a mediation, and it is the intention of the king's government that it should never lose this character."

In consequence of this communication, the onus of presenting the protocol of the 27th devolved on the British commissioner; thereby giving rise to an idea that the French government was not sincere in its professions

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\* By a note dated the 11th of January, 1831, M. Bresson informed the diplomatic committee, of which the Count de Celles was president, that "the king and his government thought that the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg would throw Belgium into great embarrassments—that this prince would not be recognized by the great powers, *and under no consideration (dans aucun cas) by France.*" Yet, on the 16th of the same month, Count Sebastiani declared in the French chamber, that France, "respecting the right of the Belgians to elect their own monarch, *would recognize that monarch, whomsoever he might be.*"

of cordiality towards the other powers, and that it was inclined to support the Belgians in their extravagant pretensions to the left bank of the Scheldt, and Maestricht. By a singular coincidence which had all the air of calculation, Count Sebastiani's dispatch reached Brussels on the morning of the election of the Duke of Nemours, where it produced a striking effect on the public, and added to the illusion of those who relied on the acceptance of that prince. Fortunately, the embarrassments of Russia, the perfect unity existing between Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand, the consummate temper and ability displayed by both, and the immense superiority of the latter over Count Sebastiani, neutralized any evil results that might have arisen from this proceeding. A proceeding the more inexplicable, since a note from Count Sebastiani to the Belgic envoy at Paris, Mr. Le Hon, of the 15th of April following, placed the former in direct contradiction with himself, by certifying the adhesion of France to the protocol of the 20th of January, and terminating by declaring, "that he believed he could not furnish a more convincing proof of his amicable sentiments, than by advising the Belgians to adhere without restriction or delay to that document." Similar notices of adhesion to the protocol of the 27th were addressed to the Conference, and officially acknowledged by them on the 17th of April. (Protocol 21.)

By thus retracing its steps, and withdrawing its objections, the French cabinet dispelled the darkness and confusion that for a short time clouded the negotiations, and threatened the most grievous consequences. In the meanwhile, however, these incidents had been highly advantageous to Belgium, for by retarding the march of the negotiations, they compelled the plenipotentiaries to enter more minutely into the territorial and financial questions, and enabled them to devise a system of com-



pensation for the one, and a more equitable division as regarded the other.

However unfounded the objections of the Belgians might have been to the general spirit and tenor of these protocols; however chimerical the idea of establishing a country so situated as Belgium as a “perpetually neutral state,” the reclamations against the allotment of the debt were indispensable. It is true that those conditions were skilfully declared to be simple “*propositions* ;” but it was impossible for Belgium to admit them under any shape or form, or to avoid rejecting them *instantly*. Indeed, the Conference was not long ere it was constrained to admit the injustice of saddling Belgium with so large a portion as  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the interest of the general debt, without distinguishing that part which had been incurred prior to, or subsequent upon, the union of the two countries. The hardship of such an arrangement must be apparent to the most prejudiced person, when it is considered that the maximum of the Belgian burthens, antecedent to 1815, and known as the Austro and Gallo-Belgic debts, did not exceed 2,750,000 florins of annual interest ;\* and on taking a just share—that is, *half* of the debts incurred during the union—the whole would only amount to 4,847,572 florins, or, including the deferred debt, to 5,800,000 florins, in round numbers. On the other hand, at the moment of the union of the two countries, in 1815, Holland was loaded with debts, the capital of which amounted to 575 millions active, and 1150 millions deferred. The just proportion, therefore, between the obligations of the two nations with the public creditor, prior to the union, was as 43 is

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\* “ Observations sur la Pièce, adressée à la Conférence par les Plénipotentiaires Hollandois, relative à la Dette.”—Rapport du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères. Brussels, 1831.

to 2.\* The 48th protocol rectified this injustice ; but in announcing that the interest of the various debts incurred during the union amounted to 10,100,000 florins, of which the half was allotted to Belgium, it proclaimed a most remarkable fact—namely, that the Netherlands government, in lieu of being enabled to diminish its burthens, during *fifteen years of profound peace* and apparent prosperity, had *augmented* them in the proportion of one-tenth of her whole budget, which in 1830 amounted to about eighty millions, *with a deficit of five !* Without going to the length of Mr. Nothomb, who asks “if this fact does not justify the revolution ?” it may be affirmed, that it is a convincing proof either of the unskilful management of the Netherlands financial system, or that the country was not in that flourishing condition so generally supposed by all strangers. Continued peace, and augmenting incumbrances, are anomalies in political economy that justify the extremes of discontent.

In the meanwhile, however, the Dutch cabinet, to whom the propositions, especially as regarded the debt, were eminently advantageous, fully adhered to the protocol rejected by the Belgians, by a note addressed to the Conference on the 18th February—an important fact ; for, without directly recognizing Belgic independence, or renouncing his pretensions to the throne, his Nether-

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\* The French debt incurred during the union with France amounted to two millions of florins, and the Austro-Belgic debt to 756,000 florins annual interest. The latter, as the name indicates, arose from certain engagements of Austria when mistress of the Low Countries. In virtue of a convention concluded between the Emperor and the King of the Netherlands, bearing date the 11th of October, 1815, with a secret *addenda* of the 5th of March, 1828, the latter took on himself this charge, which had been previously supported by France, according to the eighth article of the treaty of Luneville.

lands Majesty thereby “fully and entirely” admitted the principles of that independence, as well as those of the *election* of a new sovereign. Mr. Nothomb goes still further in treating this point; for he argues, “that the king not only retracted hereby his protestation against the principle of Belgic independence—the basis of separation, according to the protocol of the 20th January, having no other purport than to realize the object of that of the 20th December—but that he implicitly abdicated the sovereignty of Belgium, since the protocol of the 27th January, in its conclusion, admits the possibility of the election of a new sovereign.” The first of these conclusions is certainly borne out by the very letter of the protocol in question; but it does not follow, because the Netherlands monarch was ready to admit the theory or opinion of the Conference, as to the possibility of electing a new sovereign, that he should recognize this as a consummated fact, and thereby renounce for himself and family those rights to which he has since clung with the most unflinching tenacity. Every subsequent act has proved that such an admission was the farthest from his intentions. Indeed, he has been accused of risking the peace of Europe, and sacrificing all other considerations to those of his own family, without regard to the real interests or views of the Dutch people. Certainly, the Netherlands statesmen, who had given such irrefragable proofs of sagacity and ability during the whole course of the negotiation, and whose state papers are for the most part models of diplomatic talent, were not likely to be surprised into the admission of a principle, against which their sovereign was determined to combat “*unguibus et rostro*.”\*

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\* Such was the literal expression employed by the King of the Netherlands in a conversation held with a foreign diplomatist. “I am resolved,” said his majesty, “to resist tooth and nail; and if the

The labours of the Conference, during the month of February, were not less arduous than during that which had preceded them, and were rendered still more complicated by the embarrassments resulting from Count Sebastiani's note of the 1st. Fortunately for Belgic independence and the repose of Europe, neither the counsels or predilections of that minister long prevailed in the French cabinet. Had it been otherwise, the anti-sympathetic feeling which he evinced for the one—a feeling not arising from any regard to the King of the Netherlands, but from an overweening attachment to the aggrandizement of France—would have given rise to consequences that must have fatally compromised the other, and produced that convulsion which the statesmen of Europe were eagerly seeking to avert. Between the 1st and the 19th of February, seven new protocols were made public. Those of the first and seventh (Nos. 14 and 15) consecrated the principle, that the five great powers were resolved to renounce the acceptance of the Belgic throne for any prince directly appertaining to their respective dynasties; the latter of these two documents, expressly stipulating the exclusion of the Dukes of Nemours and Leuchtenberg, was returned by the Belgians, as being “contrary to the decision of congress.” Although the protocol of the 7th was based on a declaration of the King of the French, who had solemnly refused the sovereignty for his son, M. Bresson declined participating in its presentation, and thus it again fell to Lord Ponsonby's lot to act without the support of his colleague, between whom and himself a coldness had now arisen, which terminated in the recall of the former. Perfect

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worst comes to the worst, I and my family are prepared to follow the example of that young hero” (pointing to an engraving of Van Speyck, which hung in his cabinet).

unity, if not perfect cordiality, was so essentially necessary to the maintenance of amicable relations, that the removal of one or the other of these two diplomatists became essential. Justice guided the Conference in its selection; but a mission to Berlin soon recompensed M. Bresson for the talent he had shewn, as well as for the momentary annoyance which he must have suffered from obeying the contradictory instructions of the chief of his department.

The protocol of the 19th of February (No. 19), one of the most interesting productions issued by the Conference, merits peculiar attention; it may be considered as containing the political creed of the great powers, and as a skilful summary of all the negotiations up to that period. One or two extracts deserve more than ordinary notice. After briefly explaining the motives that led to the union of Holland and Belgium, as well as those which guided the Conference in resolving to modify the treaties of Vienna and Paris, it proceeds thus: "The union of Holland and Belgium fell to pieces. Official communications were not long wanting to convince the five courts that the measures originally destined to maintain it (the union) could neither re-establish it for the time being, nor preserve it for the future; and that henceforward, in lieu of amalgamating the affections and welfare of the two people, it would only bring their passions and animosities into collision, and cause war and all its calamities to spring from the shock.

"It was not the province of the powers to judge of the causes that led to the rupture of the bonds they had formed. But when they saw these bonds torn asunder, it behoved them still to secure the object they had proposed to themselves in their formation. It behoved them, through the medium of new combinations, to ensure to Europe that tranquillity of which the union of Holland

and Belgium had formed one of the bases. The powers were imperiously required to do so. They had the right, and events imposed on them the duty, of preventing the Belgic provinces, now *become independent*, from endangering the general security and equilibrium of Europe."

After alluding to the measures that had been adopted to avert the further effusion of blood, and to demonstrate to the Belgians the duties they owed to Europe—duties no way inconsistent with their vows for separation and independence: it proceeds thus. "Each nation has its particular rights, but Europe has also her rights. Social order has conferred these upon her. Belgium having become independent, found the treaties that govern Europe already framed and in vigour. She ought, therefore, to respect, and not to infringe them. In respecting them, she conciliated the interests and repose of the great community of European states. By infringing them, she would have produced anarchy and war. The powers could alone prevent this misfortune; and since they *could*, they *ought*. It was their duty to establish the salutary maxim, that though circumstances may give rise to the creation of a new state in Europe, they do not give this state more right to alter the general system into which it enters, than any changes which may occur in the condition of an ancient state, authorize it to consider itself absolved from its anterior engagements. This is the maxim of all civilized nations; a maxim to which is attached the very principle according to which states survive their governments, as well as the imperishable obligations of treaties on those who contract them; a maxim, in short, that cannot be forgotten, without causing the retrocession of civilization, of which morality and public faith are fortunately both the first results and the first guarantees.

“As to the rest,” add the plenipotentiaries, “Belgium has obtained all she could desire; a separation from Holland, independence, external security, guarantees for her territory and neutrality, the free navigation of the rivers that serve as issues to her productions, and the tranquil enjoyment of her national liberties. Such are the arrangements against which the protestations in question oppose the publicly avowed intention of neither, respecting the possessions or rights of neighbouring states,”\*

This memorable document, replete with maxims of the most elevated and enlightened policy, terminated by seven articles, renewing the arrangements determined on by the protocol of the 20th of January, and declaring them to be “fundamental and irrevocable.”† Circumstances, however, arose that rendered it necessary to modify these arrangements; and by a letter of the 17th of March, addressed to the French government by the four powers, in reply to the objections of the former, both to the twelfth protocol and to certain portions of the nineteenth, it was declared, “That the principle laid down in regard to the partition of the debt, was that each country should bear its *just proportion* of the burthens incurred before and after the union, but that it was not intended to fix the exact amount, this question being reserved for ulterior arrangement.”

Such is the general outline of the diplomatic relations of the Conference during the first epoch. To follow these diversified and contradictory negotiations through all their various phases and ramifications, would necessi-

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\* Meaning those protestations of congress, and the diplomatic committee, to the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth protocols.

† See Appendix, No. 29.

tate an analysis of the whole of the protocols. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to those striking and salient events which gave such an air of contradiction to the whole proceeding, by compelling the Conference to pursue, what might be termed, a Penelopean process of diplomacy ; that is, by undoing by one act the very stipulations which, but a few hours previous, it had declared to be final and irrevocable.



## CHAPTER V.

MILITARY AND SOCIAL POSITION OF BELGIUM—ORGANIZATION OF ITS ARMY—SUCCESSIVE WAR MINISTERS—FINANCIAL CONDITION—RIOTS—POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS—PILLAGE OF MR. MATHIEUS' HOUSE—CONDUCT OF THE ORANGISTS—POLICY OF LORD PONSBY; HIS PRUDENCE AND SKILFUL CONDUCT—VAN DER SMISSEN—SITUATION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES—TACTICS OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE'S PARTISANS—ASPECT OF BRUSSELS—CIVIC GUARDS.

IN the meantime the state of uncertainty and incoherence in which Belgium was plunged by the unsettled state of affairs, and the pretensions and intrigues of conflicting parties, principally arising from the want of a central rallying point, was so intensely felt, not only by the sane part of the nation, but even by the most exaggerated patriots, that already in the month of January it was almost unanimously resolved to bring the question of the choice of a sovereign to an immediate issue. Before offering any details of these proceedings, which occupied public attention from the commencement of January until the question was finally set at rest by the acceptance of Prince Leopold on the 11th of July, it is necessary to offer a few observations on the general condition of the country, and to show what progress it had made towards re-organization. The two points that naturally attract most interest, are those of its defensive and financial resources; for the juridical and internal administration, though considerably modified, especially by the re-establishment of trial by jury, appeared to march without effort or shock; and, beyond the univer-

sal struggle for place and appointment, gave little trouble to the ministers charged with the administration of justice and the interior.

So complete had been the dissolution of the Netherlands forces, so absolute was the destruction of all discipline and subordination, so immense the pretensions of men of all ranks, not only to promotion but command, that up to the period in question little progress had been made in the re-composition of the Belgic army. The Netherlands military system had perished with the government, and that of France had been adopted in its place. Re-creation was, therefore, necessary in every branch, and in none more so than in the artillery and engineers. For, although the armament of the fortresses was complete in its most minute details, and the Dutch had left behind them a quantity of light guns, and material sufficient to establish a noble park of field-artillery. the Belgians found themselves not only without superior officers, but without subalterns, non-commissioned, or instructors. The whole of the mounted batteries having been removed into Holland, they were likewise without horses. It was with the utmost difficulty, therefore, that at the expiration of four or five months, they were enabled to organize half-a-dozen brigades of guns, and even these miserably deficient in every necessary qualification. The same observations are applicable to almost every other department. They had the skeletons of eleven regiments of infantry of the line, two of light infantry, ten battalions of free corps, and five regiments of cavalry, forming a nominal force of about thirty thousand infantry and two thousand horse, with double this number of civic guards; but a third of the former were non-effective, and the whole of the latter utterly useless for field service.

The general state of insubordination was pitiful. All

attempts on the part of superiors at enforcing discipline was met by inferiors with accusations of treachery and Orangism. All efforts at weeding out incapacity or punishing misconduct, were distorted into acts of anti-patriotism or lèse-nationality. On the one hand, the press—the most factious, the most unbridled that was ever endured in any country—took up the cause of the condemned, not from conviction, but from sheer love of misrule. Not content with defence, it often demanded re-integration and promotion for those whose want of every essential quality too frequently incapacitated them for the lowest grades. On the other hand, the hall of congress constantly re-echoed with the most wild and dangerous doctrines. Many of the deputies, while they cried aloud for war, and rebuked the ministers for the inefficiency of the troops, not only disheartened the regular military, by exaggerated praises of the hordes of volunteers or free corps, but became the open advocates of indiscipline, by supporting those whose misconduct and ignorant pretensions rendered organization almost impracticable. Half-a-dozen lawyers, without the slightest acquaintance with the simplest rules of strategy or tactics, not only arrogated to themselves that knowledge of military economy which can only be acquired by long years of toil and experience in the field and cabinet, but pretended to dictate plans of attack and defence as visionary as they were dangerous. Some there were who, because a handful of volunteers had driven Prince Frederick from Brussels, affected to deride the use of regular armies; and, with bombastic exaggeration, declared that their blouses and barricades might bid defiance to the legions of united Europe.

In lieu of supporting the government, these men, whose fevered discourses found a ready echo in the journals, did all they could to increase the already

numerous obstacles that lay in the way of re-organization; and while they filled the nation with the most preposterous notions of its own strength and importance, threw it off its guard, and thereby materially contributed to the disasters of August.

The task of the successive war ministers was, in fact, most arduous, and required the energy and vigour of one of those superior minds that revolutions sometimes produce, but which, in the present instance, was nowhere forthcoming. Exposed to the personalities of the deputies, and nailed, as it were, to the pillory by the journals, which exercised the most unblushing terrorism over the public mind; trembling lest any act of vigour should expose them to be denounced to the patriotic associations, and thence entail on them proscription or pillage—a weapon wielded by the latter with fearful dexterity, the successive ministers evinced a degree of lukewarmness and moral debility utterly incompatible with the exigencies of a period, when, to effect any good, it was essentially necessary for a man to arm himself with the most stoical firmness and an utter disregard, not to the prudent counsels, but to the *assaults* of the press.

They had to create every thing afresh, as if no army had ever existed. The raw material was there in abundance, but the question was how to mould it into some serviceable shape.\* “Indeed, down to the month of August 1831, the armed force presented a chaotic picture of incapacity, jealousy, and division on the part of the chiefs, of arrogant pretension on that of the subalterns, and of insubordination on that of the non-commissioned and soldiers, not to have been surpassed by the bands of Bolivar or other South-American leaders.

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\* The passages marked by inverted commas, with some necessary alterations, are extracted from a contribution to the *United Service Journal*, of Jan. 1833, from the author's pen.—[NOTE OF ED.]

“ The want of officers and non-commissioned was above all most sensibly felt. The average proportion of Dutch over Belgians having been as six to one, it can be no matter of surprise that Belgium should not find herself in a condition to furnish the requisite number for her augmented army, especially for those scientific branches where Dutch partiality had most preponderated.

“ This immense increase of the troops, and the corresponding deficiency of officers, rendered the admission of foreigners, or the most rapid promotion, inevitable. In later times much discretion has been shewn in the selection and promotion of the former ; but at the period in question, the higher military grades were distributed with a less sparing hand. Thus Van Halen, an exiled Spanish lieutenant-colonel, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general ; Count d'Hane, a major of cuirassiers ; Count Vandermeere, who had served as a captain in the colonies ; Mr. Goblet, a captain of engineers ; the Marquess de Chasteler, a former captain of hussars, and Mr. Niellon, a retired subaltern of French cavalry, were quickly raised to the rank of major-generals ; whilst Mr. Charles de Brouckère and Mr. Kessels, ex-lieutenants of artillery, were promoted, the one to the rank of colonel, the other to that of major in the same corps.\* Such instances of rapid advancement, anomalous as they may appear in ordinary times, are however one of the inevitable results of those great political con-

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\* It must, however, be observed, that as early as 1819, Mr. de Brouckère held the rank of lieutenant, and was charged with the instruction of all the officers and non-commissioned, and cadets of his battalion. He quitted the service in 1820, and devoted himself to the study of administration. Possessing considerable property in Limbourg, he was named lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of communal guards in 1826 ; but being disgusted at the conduct of the government, he resigned this post in December, 1829.

vulsions, which open a field for the development of political or military powers, that might otherwise remain for ever buried in obscurity.

“It was thus that during the wars of the first French revolution, a crowd of citizens and private individuals suddenly started into notice, and ere a few months had elapsed, some among them added their names to that galaxy of illustrious commanders, who have shed such lustre in the annals of French history. It must, however, be observed that many officers, who owed their sudden elevation to the revolution, would already have attained higher grades, had the Dutch government shewn but common impartiality in its selections. Nay, had it not absolutely rejected the services, or placed at the bottom of each rank, many of those who, faithful to the falling fortunes of Napoleon, awaited his abdication, and their own honourable dismissal, ere they quitted the French service, and offered their swords to their new sovereign, upon the first formation of the Netherlands kingdom.

“When the unlooked-for defeat of the king’s troops took place, and the remnants had retired across the North Brabant frontier, the Belgic war department was directed by Mr. Jolly, having Major-general Nypels, who had replaced Van Halen, as commander-in-chief of the active forces. At that time the skeletons of two or three regular regiments were in process of formation ; but the principal force consisted of roving bands of volunteers or free corps, amongst whom were adventurers of every class, country, and denomination. The provisional government, who soon discovered that Mr. Jolly was no way adapted for the task he had undertaken, was not sorry to accept his resignation, and replaced him by Major-general Goethals. Having grown grey in the career of arms, and being accustomed to the precision and

routine of regular armies, but possessing neither activity nor energy sufficient for the due execution of the duty he had undertaken, Goethals soon found all attempt to direct and organize so incoherent a mass beyond his power, and at variance with his antecedents: he, therefore, retired after a short essay, during which no progress was made.

“He was followed by General Goblet. This officer had served with credit to himself in the French engineers; had made several campaigns, and particularly distinguished himself at the siege of St. Sebastian; where he largely contributed to its gallant defence. Though a lieutenant of 1808, he was not promoted to the rank of captain till 1822; nor did he receive further advancement until the revolution, when he was successively and rapidly raised to the rank of field officer and general of brigade—no exaggerated recompence for twenty-two years’ arduous and honourable service. Goblet, whose mild disposition, regular habits, and moderate politics ill-suited him for such a charge, accepted office with reluctance, and was not long ere he sought to escape from its labours and vexations. Discouraged by the virulent attacks of the opposition and press, and finding himself unable to satisfy the pretensions of the many claimants to promotion; and being unable to establish that discipline or regularity, without which all effort at organization was useless, he gladly resigned, and exchanged the burthens of administration for the superintendence of the engineer department, of which he was appointed director.

“In a few days he was replaced by Count d’Hane.\* But, however zealous and indefatigable this officer may

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\* Afterwards aide-de-camp-general to King Leopold, and superintendent of his majesty’s military household.

have been, he also soon found himself unequal to support the immense weight of responsibility and diversified labour that accumulated around him, and only continued at his post at the pressing solicitation of his colleagues. Some progress was, however, made during this and the preceding administration. The army, augmented to twelve regiments of the line, two of chasseurs, five of cavalry, and eight brigades of guns, besides two or three battalions of sharp-shooters, was divided into two corps.\* The one, called the army of the Meuse, under Lieut.-general Daine, having its head-quarters at Tongres, was destined to watch Maestricht and the Campine frontier, by Hasselt, Hamont, and Weerd; the other, designated as the army of the Scheldt, was cantoned in the vicinity of Schilde and Turnhout, with the view of covering the roads from Breda and Bergen-op-Zoom. A small garrison occupied Antwerp, while a detached corps under General Duvivier, with its head-quarters at Ghent, was destined to observe Dutch Flanders. The total budget of the war department amounted to thirty-six millions florins.

“Had d’Hane or Goblet been fairly seconded by those under their orders, much might have been effected; but the disunion and jealousy among the chiefs, the negligence, bad faith, and malversation among some officers, and the want of experience of the great majority of all ranks, baffled their exertions, and kept them in a constant state of error. Thus, when d’Hane laid a report of the army before the chambers, as late even as the 25th of May, declaring that he had reinforced the active forces by 26,000 men, and that he had

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\* Each regiment consisted of three active, and one depôt battalion of six companies. The regiments of cavalry had four squadrons of 120 horses each; and the brigades of artillery six pieces, until a later period, when they were augmented to eight.



50,000 disposable infantry, 60 field-pieces, and 3,000 horse, the total amount of effectives present did not exceed 25,000, while half the artillery was without tumbrils, or was only incompletely horsed.\*

“Disheartened at the bad success of his efforts, and harassed by the same attacks that had affected his predecessor, General d’Hane also retired, and was followed on the 16th of June, by Major-general De Failly, who had commanded the 5th Dutch regiment during the attack on Brussels, and had subsequently been appointed governor of Antwerp. This officer continued his functions until after King Leopold arrived, and was in office at the moment of the Dutch invasion. But the army appeared rather to have retrograded than advanced under his administration. Confusion and insubordination were at their height; and thus, when the Prince of Orange threw himself into the Campine, the troops were surprised in a state of indiscipline and destitution that baffles all description.

“It is but just, however, to observe, if there was a deficiency of brilliant talent, energy, and experience in the part of the successive war ministers, that they encountered obstacles at every step that were calculated to dishearten the most sanguine, and to frustrate the combinations of the boldest and most matured military economist. So irritable and inflammable was the state of the public mind—so inconsiderate the language of the deputies—so virulent and licentious the workings of the press, that men were already overwhelmed with libels, and condemned as unfit for office ere yet they had

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\* The waste, or misemployment of the public money, must have been immense; for the war-budget of 1833, for an army of 110,000 effectives, including 8,000 cavalry, and 136 field-pieces, fully horsed and equipped, only exceeded by a trifling sum that of 1831 for a third of that number.

commenced their functions. In lieu of meeting with indulgence or support on entering office, they were vilified and held up to scorn ; and the violence of their assailants, who, having torn down the military edifice, expected it to be rebuilt in a day, augmented in proportion to the difficulties which were the natural result of the revolution. Lord Halifax's maxim, "that there are few things so criminal as place," was amply verified on this, and indeed on almost every subsequent occasion in Belgium."

Nothing, in fact, could present a more striking contrast than the moral conduct of the belligerents. The disasters that had overwhelmed the Dutch appeared to operate like a talisman upon the whole nation. Scarcely had it recovered from the first stupor of defeat, ere the unanimous population roused themselves with the most noble and devoted energy. Firm and united among themselves, both press and public rallied round the throne, and forgetting all party or individual differences, ardently combined for the support of government and the defence of the country. There was but one voice, one purpose. King, princes, senators, and people, were linked together in one bond. No sacrifice was esteemed too great, no endurance too severe. Shaking off their usual tardy habits, activity and vigour pervaded every department. The process of re-organizing their legions advanced rapidly, and ere yet their adversaries had 20,000 men in a fit condition to take the field, the Dutch could boast of 35,000 well-disciplined infantry (independent of communal guards), 4,000 cavalry, and 64 field-pieces ; a large body of devoted and obedient officers, and an experienced staff, with magazines, train, transport, hospitals, and every requisite for defence or attack.

On the other hand, the Belgians, torn by internal

feuds, jealousies, and conspiracies, without unity of purpose or political system, were a prey to the direst confusion. They counted, it is true, a long list of generals, field-officers, and staff, but they were, in fact, without efficient commanders or officers in any one department. Both generals and subalterns were at the mercy of the press, the congress, and the associations, which assumed the most overbearing and tyrannical pretensions to omnipotence and omniscience. Their infantry, though well-clothed and armed, was destitute of field equipment, miserably drilled, and scarcely able to execute the simplest evolutions. The cavalry, though well horsed, was deficient in every essential point, and was totally unacquainted with the commonest field duties. The artillery, though composed of athletic and powerful men, was without officers, and above all, non-commissioned, and had no experience whatever either in the practice or in the theory of gunnery. They were without commissariat, hospitals, transports, or reserves; in short, the whole was in a condition utterly unfit to oppose an enemy, and continued in this deplorable state until the disasters of Louvain showed the necessity of pursuing a different system, and induced both deputies and journalists to remain silent, or to co-operate with the government in the process of organization.\*

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\* To judge by the debates in the Belgic chambers, its representatives are not yet cured of their bombast. In the discussion that took place on the 24th of March, 1834, in consequence of the Dutch having assumed a menacing attitude in North Brabant, a member thus expressed himself:—"It was not courage that was wanting in the month of August, 1831; for wherever the Belgians measured themselves with the Dutch, *the latter were beaten!!* I know a major who, at the head of four hundred men, repulsed and defeated a corps of ten thousand Dutch!" This was spoken and listened to with undisturbed gravity!

Such may be taken as the outline of the military or material condition of the Belgians during the first twelve months subsequent to the revolution; a condition that in no way corresponded either with their strategical position, which was eminently disadvantageous as regarded Holland, or with that of their expenditure which was upon the most liberal scale. A few words will suffice to throw some light on the pecuniary resources of the provisional government, as well as the means adopted to meet the extraordinary exigencies of the crisis.

Under the ancient government, the southern provinces had been taxed somewhere in the proportion of  $\frac{1}{3}$ . That is, taking the whole of the ways and means arising from taxation to have been 75,000,000 fl., Belgium, with a population of 3,900,000, paid 40,000,000; while Holland, whose inhabitants did not exceed 2,100,000, paid the remaining 35,000,000. But this calculation was not based on the amount of population, but on that of the comparative wealth of the two countries. The great riches of Holland consisting in her commerce, and that of Belgium in her agriculture, the Dutch cities contributed much more largely than those of similar extent in Belgium. But the agricultural wealth of the latter, was not so much superior to that of the former, as to render the balance equal. Indeed, some parts of Namur, and the greater portion of Luxembourg, were so sterile as to produce a revenue totally out of proportion to their extent. The low rate of electoral qualification in these provinces, which only averaged twenty florins, whilst in Flanders it is as high as thirty, is a sufficient proof of the comparative inferiority of the former.

Upon assuming office, the provisional government found the public coffers nearly empty, and were therefore constrained to seek assistance from the bank, which advanced 600,000 florins. But as this occurred at the

commencement of the last financial quarter, and as the taxes were paid with more than wonted punctuality, the sums received by the treasury promptly enabled it to meet the first pressing demands. The ways and means, although augmented by an addition of twenty centimes per franc on the property tax, being insufficient for the increasing exigencies of the crisis, it was necessary to have recourse to other measures.\* To raise money by the ordinary process was of course impracticable. The only mode of obtaining supplies was, therefore, to authorize a patriotic loan, or, in case of this failing, to exact a compulsory contribution. The first was essayed by an *arrêté* of the 22d of October; but not producing much more than half a million, in addition to 380,000 francs voluntary gifts, the second was enforced to the amount of 25,000,000 in October, and 21,000,000 in March.†

Such were the resources and means pecuniary employed to meet the struggle.

To examine the moral situation of a nation emerging from, or rather still struggling in, a state of revolution, is one of the most instructive studies that can occupy the philosopher or political economist. That of Belgium presented a continual series of episodes fraught with the deepest interest, not only as regarded the mighty foreign questions that were interwoven with its destinies, but as concerned such internal passages and incidents as merely related to her own moral character, and the rank she was entitled to hold in the estimation of other people. Al-

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\* The Dutch financial system modified by the abolition of some taxes, and divested of many fiscal inconveniences, was maintained, and is still in existence.

† These forced loans, raised by doubling and forestalling a part of the direct taxes, were reimbursed with five per cent. interest in 1832 and 1833.

though much exaggeration and misrepresentation went abroad, it cannot be denied that, during the first eight months, Belgium presented a picture of effervescence and commotion, which, independent of its dangerous results to Europe, menaced her own cities with civil war under its worst forms. Exclusive of the republicans, whose efforts constantly tended to the subversion of all social order at home and abroad, and whose intrigues were encouraged by General Lemarque, Odillon, Barrot, and others of the French movement party, three great factions divided the country. These were the independents—the re-unionists, some of whom were republicans—and the Orangists.

The first of these possessed the greatest power, its doctrines being advocated by the most politic and enlightened members in the chambers, and supported by the popular journals, and Catholic party, whose preponderating influence sufficed to ensure success to almost any system it chose to adopt. The most constant and eloquent partisans of independence were Messrs. Lebeau, Van de Weyer, de Muelenaere, and Nothomb. They may, in fact, be considered as the parents of that line of policy to which Europe is indebted for the maintenance of peace, and Belgium for the consolidation of her nationality. They were also mainly instrumental in producing a modification of that diplomatic system, which, from its being exclusively French, and, as it were, essentially anti-English, largely contributed to enhance the difficulties of the negotiations, and to augment the embarrassments that lay in the way of Lord Ponsonby.\* The ability with which

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\* It was because the principles of some of his colleagues were essentially French, that Mr. Van de Weyer resigned the ministry for foreign affairs in April, 1831, wisely determining to have no share in a system that menaced the most serious results to

the latter availed himself of this favorable turn, served not only to restore the balance, but proved to the generality of the Belgians that their existence as a nation depended on their frankly associating themselves with that policy which had for its object a cordial union between France and Great Britain. For nothing but the most wilful prejudice could blind the Belgians to the fact, that without perfect unanimity between France and England, Belgium would be seized by France, or be again made over to some other power, as "*a territorial acquisition.*"

The re-unionists were all aware of this. Every effort, therefore, was employed by them to create rivalries and jealousies between the two cabinets and their diplomatic agents, and to nourish that thirst for aggrandizement and conquest which they well knew lurked at the bottom of Count Sebastiani's heart; a passion from which even Prince Talleyrand himself was not totally exempt. Though the immense preponderance of monarchical, over all other theories, rendered the efforts of the republicans utterly nugatory, and although the re-unionists were few in number, still, up to the latest hour, both these factions caused considerable embarrassment: the one, by inviting into the country a number of desperate individuals, members of the "Society of the Rights of Man," and other associations; the other by constantly endeavouring to induce the French cabinet to deviate from that system of moderation which had been laid down by Lafitte, and cordially pursued by Casimir Perier.\*

Inimical as this party might have been to the repose

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Europe, and the annihilation of the independence of his country. Such conduct was at once politic and patriotic.

\* These passages were written long before the melancholy scenes of the 5th of April, 1834.--[NOTE OF ED.]

of Europe, it was not more so than that of the Orangists—from their perpetual efforts to induce armed intervention; from their fomenting plots and conspiracies among the people; from their spreading discontent, treachery, and confusion through the army; and from their serving as a cause or pretext to those detestable scenes of pillage and outrage, that so frequently disgraced both the capital and provincial towns; scenes in which they, however, were the victims, not the actors.

The principal counterpoise to the efforts of the Orangists was the patriotic association, to which many officers, as well as the majority of public functionaries resident in the capital, were affiliated. This dangerous *imperium in imperio*, whose powers were equal if not superior to that of the government, exercised a species of inquisitorial terrorism over the public mind, that vibrated through the most distant parts of the country. So puissant, indeed, was its influence, that it not only held considerable sway over congress, embarrassing and counteracting the march of government, but it frequently placed the lives and properties of the citizens at the mercy of the populace, by stimulating them to the most wanton acts of outrage and misrule, and thus spreading consternation and affliction throughout the land.

“The intelligence from Hainault,” says, the *Courrier Belge*, in an article written at an earlier date, but singularly applicable to this period, “is most distressing; and the more so, since these symptoms of anarchy and disorganization appear connected with some dark plots and criminal machinations.\* Here it is not an enemy that is defeated, but peaceable citizens that are despoiled, or brethren that are ruined or massacred. There, respec-

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\* Alluding to the supposed intrigues of the Orangists to excite disorder, when they, in fact, were the invariable victims.



table merchants or manufacturers, who diffused abundance and civilization around, are mercilessly plundered by a frenzied populace. Splendid factories, the glory and prosperity of our beautiful country, are sacked and devastated by hordes of malefactors; and we are reduced to the necessity of placing our cities in a state of siege, (this occurred at Ghent), in order to protect ourselves against internal enemies, more barbarous than the Dutch soldiers."

The only apology that can be offered for revolutions is, when they are the result, not of despotism, but of insupportable tyranny, and the violation of civil rights; or, when they arise from the universal demand for constitutional ameliorations, and are made in the sole interest of social order, civilization, and rational liberty. For the mild and paternal government of Prussia is a proof that the subjects of absolute sovereigns may enjoy almost all the benefits of the most liberal constitutional monarchy. But revolutions are fearful curses, when, escorted by violence and outrage, they advance amidst the ruin of the peaceable and industrious, or when they rend asunder all the ties of law and justice. When civil war, anarchy, and pillage are the results of political changes—a result unfortunately too common to all revolutions—and terrorism is enthroned in the name of liberty; then the slavery of the most despotic government is a thousand times preferable. Such horrors must be the inevitable consequence of the uncontrolled power of political associations; no matter what their title, or the country that gives them birth. Whatever may be their ostensible purport, the true object of political unions is not consolidation, but subversion. It is a coalition to oppose the power of the many to that of the few; or, in other words, to substitute the argument of force for that of reason and the law. Associations and legal

governments are incompatible. France, after two revolutions, and dreading a third, has discovered this truth.

“Political associations,” says an eloquent French orator, “such as we understand them, such as they exist among us, forming a city within a city, a state within a state; calling themselves a republic in the heart of a monarchy; having their journals, rostrums, army, and diplomacy; declaring war, not only against the constituted authorities at home, but against powers abroad; seeking to subjugate us all beneath their yoke; falsifying all our institutions by their mere existence; striking at the prosperity of all by their efforts; suspending the labours of the industrious, when the fruits of their industry are most necessary for their own existence and our prosperity; being able, at any moment, to plunge us into a war with our neighbours, when we have resolved to maintain peace; and, nevertheless, enfeebling us in the opinion of Europe, rendered distrustful by this schism in the national bond, and by other schisms, still more dangerous, that may result from their machinations; political associations such as these are monstrous anomalies, incompatible with national existence. The liberty demanded by them is not the freedom of association, but impunity for conspiracy—that is, the power of executing in open day, aloud, by tens and hundreds of thousands, with the press for their interpreter, and the whole country as their theatre, that which hitherto had only been attempted in the dark, in silence, and by a few timid conspirators. This is the good old anarchy of 1793—thorough-bred anarchy!—(*Anarchie de pur sang*).”\*

These Strictures on the Political Societies of France

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\* Speech of M. Salvandi in the French Chambers on the 25th of March, 1834, on the law for the abolition of political associations.

are applicable, on a reduced scale, to those of Belgium. Fortunately, the good sense of the nation did justice to them, without the necessity of legal intervention; the country saw the danger of their existence, and they, consequently, fell to the ground, for want of support and aliment. The leading members of this association, selected from among the most exaggerated patriots—for the title of patriot was assumed in contradistinction to that of Orangist, no matter whether the individual was republican, re-unionist, or independent—have strenuously repudiated all participation in the disorders that afflicted Brussels, Liege, Ghent, Antwerp, and other cities, especially during the months of February and March, 1831. Not a shadow of doubt, however, exists that these outrages were not the spontaneous acts of the people, but that they were suggested and executed under the eye of the associations in the capital, and organized by its delegates in the provinces. One example—that of the devastation of Mr. Mathieu's house, at Brussels, on the night of the 26th of March, 1831—may be taken as an illustration of the power of the association, and will suffice to demonstrate how these melancholy scenes were generally organized and executed.

Counter-revolutionary plots, real or imaginary, being in constant agitation; public rumour casting suspicion on the fidelity of some, and private denunciation accusing other individuals of conspiring against the national cause, the exasperation of the political leaders was excited to the utmost pitch. However, as no absolute proofs of treachery could be brought home to any particular person, the vengeance of the association was directed against those whose antecedents and inclinations rendered them liable to suspicion. It was, therefore, resolved (to adopt the cant term of the day) to “warm

up popular patriotism" by "*a salutary act*" of terrorism, that might serve as a lesson to others. The victim, in this instance, was a general merchant of considerable wealth, who was supposed to have furnished funds to the Orangists, and to be one of the most active and zealous partisans of the prince. Not only was the intended pillage known many hours previous, and openly discussed in the streets, but the populace, the instruments of outrage, were regularly mustered, paid, and instructed; and influential members of the association were seen to applaud the disgraceful work. Nay, the very authorities were constrained to become indirect accessaries. For, on their being informed of the meditated outrage, they deemed it advisable not to oppose this "demonstration of popular feeling," which was admitted to be an evil, but an evil calculated to produce subsequent benefit. It was said to be essential to strike terror into the ranks of the Orangists, and thus to prevent those disasters that would inevitably ensue, unless the machinations of that party were checked. A sort of compact was, therefore, entered into between the authorities and the ringleaders, who were to be allowed perfect impunity, provided their outrages were limited to the example in question.

This being settled, emissaries were employed to collect the most desperate characters from the neighbouring villages, by promising them ample remuneration for their loss of time, and a certainty of pillage, without any personal risk. Consequently, towards the afternoon of the appointed day, groups of ill-favoured strangers were seen pouring into the city, where they, forthwith, proceeded to predetermined points of rendezvous and refreshment. Here they were regaled with liquors, animated with songs, and, having received their earnest-money and the necessary instructions, soon worked them-

selves into a fearful state of excitement. As the evening closed in, they sallied forth ; and, being joined by an immense rabble of the lowest class, for awhile they paraded the streets, singing, shouting, and vociferating, "death to the Orangists !" until, at length, they rushed to the abode of their intended victim. Ere many seconds, the doors and windows being smashed to atoms, the wild horde darted into the interior, and commenced the work of devastation and pillage. Sugars, coffees, spices, valuable merchandize, costly furniture, plate, and linen fell an indiscriminate prey to the fury and avidity of the invaders. The adjacent streets were literally strewn with rich colonial produce, which was either wantonly hurled into the mud, or had escaped from the plundered sacks. The very gutters absolutely reeked with coffee. Mats and bags, filled with this and other valuable commodities, were carried off and sold by the rabble at vile prices, or were secreted by them for their own consumption. This scene having lasted some hours, and every article of merchandize and furniture having been borne away or destroyed, the rioters dragged Mr. Mathieu's carriages to the public squares ; where, fire having been procured, the whole were burned, amidst the triumphant yells of the by-standers. Some of these, in a furious state of intoxication, mounted the roofs and boxes of the vehicles, and had nigh perished in the flames. All this was effected without the slightest impediment being offered by the armed force. It is true, the drums beat to arms, the civic guards fell in, and moved about with the apparent resolution of maintaining order ; but no effort was made to protect the sufferer's property. It was evident that there was a general understanding that a sacrifice was required, and that it was resolved to permit its consummation.

The work of spoliation being completed, and the

last embers of the burning equipages having faded away, the rioters quietly dispersed; and, by a transition as rapid as it was remarkable, the town was suddenly converted from a state of the wildest uproar to one of the most absolute calm. Long before day-break on the following morning, not an individual was to be met with in the streets, so that the passing stranger could discover no vestige of the recent disorder. The terror and anxiety of the peaceable inhabitants was nevertheless most intense. Doors and windows were closed; silence reigned around, but few persons sought repose. No one knew who might be the next victim. Those especially, who considered themselves liable to be accused of attachment to the Nassau family, trembled for their lives and properties. The calm of the night was dreaded as the precursor of a renewed tempest on the morrow. Exaggerated reports of further mischief were circulated abroad. Imaginary lists of proscription were spoken of, including the names of many wealthy citizens, as well as those of certain foreigners; amongst whom were a few British subjects, who had incautiously expressed their hatred to the revolution. Indeed, the greater part of such English as had remained at Brussels, whether gentry or traders, did not hesitate to acknowledge their vows for the return of the Prince of Orange. Although those persons, especially the former, had little property at stake, and less to fear from popular fury than any other inhabitants of the capital, they were not the less forward in propagating the most alarming and wanton rumours, or in expressing fears for their own safety. The association skilfully availed itself of these reports, to augment its influence over the public mind. It was this terror, more than any other accessory, that served to paralyze all the efforts of the prince's partisans.

However, with one exception, the Belgic revolution

does not furnish a single instance of any foreigner of respectability being molested for his political opinions. The case of Baron de Krudener may be alleged in contradiction ; but it must be observed that this Russian diplomatist appeared at Brussels at a moment when party feuds ran highest ; that his arrival excited the utmost suspicion and jealousy, and that he was seen in constant communication with the most eager Orangists, who flocked around him, and had neither tact nor discretion sufficient to preserve his secret nor their own. Baron Krudener's motions were consequently watched ; spies tracked his steps and correspondence ; his object was ascertained beyond a doubt ; and as he was, to all intents and purposes, aiding those who sought to overthrow the existing government, and as he was not protected by any official or acknowledged character, that government availed itself of the means at its disposal—means sanctioned by a despotic but unabrogated law—and ordered him to quit the Belgic territory within a given period.\*

The animosity of the republicans and reunionists being likewise directed against Lord Ponsonby, for the countenance he was supposed to have shewn to the Orangists, a similar expulsory measure was suggested and pressed on the government ; but, although one or two were desirous to adopt this impolitic advice, the majority saw the danger of this insult to the British government, and the project was over-ruled. Determined, however, not to renounce altogether the intention of insulting the British envoy, three or four individuals provided themselves with stones, and taking advantage of the darkness of the night, succeeded in breaking a few panes of glass at the hotel he inhabited. Lord Ponsonby wisely treated this

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\* In virtue of the celebrated law of Vendemiaire, an IV. of the republic.

outrage with the contempt it merited, though the instigators and actors were well known to him.

In noticing this occurrence, it is necessary again to recur to the difficulties and embarrassments of Lord Ponsonby's position, as well as to the misrepresentations that have perverted both his acts and the intentions of his government. This is the more essential, since the coalition was composed of legitimists and republicans ; a coalition still more anomalous than the "union" of liberals and Catholics prior to the revolution ; and which has spared no efforts, either through the medium of the Dutch press or Belgic chambers, to vilify the one and malign the other.

In speaking of the exertions of the Orangists, and the views entertained by the powers for the election of the Prince of Orange, it has been shown to what extent the British government determined to carry its co-operation ; and that, however ardently it might have desired the *pacific* adoption of a measure that would for the time being have conciliated all foreign exigencies, it had resolved strictly to adhere to a system of non-interference, and to leave the issue to the voice of the people. From the tenor of Lord Palmerston's instructions to his agent, and from the frank and unreserved declaration of Lord Grey in the House of Lords, it would be as easy to demonstrate that this system was faithfully adhered to, both as regarded the Prince of Orange and Prince Leopold, as it would be to show that Lord Ponsonby never deviated from these instructions. It would require but a few words to prove that the moral and physical resources of the Orange party were totally inadequate to effect the desired object ; that to have countenanced such a project beyond a certain period would have been totally at variance with the interests of European peace ; and that it would have merited for the British govern-



ment all those accusations of machiavelism and insincerity that have been cast upon it.

But the time is not yet come when it is permitted to draw aside the veil from transactions apparently mysterious, and yet so simple as to require but little explanation. Such disclosures would be at once dangerous and impolitic. The period is yet too recent. Men's passions are still too much excited to admit of stating truths that might expose estimable individuals to popular vengeance, and rekindle the animosities and jealousies of those who consider themselves the "men of the revolution," against those who are either designated as the "men of the morrow," or who, having fallen into the wake of the revolution, are hostile to its principles, although they have loyally and frankly adopted its consequences.\*

At a moment when the Belgian monarch is endeavouring with political sagacity to overlook the existence of any other party than that which called him to the throne; when he is striving to amalgamate divergent opinions, to rally all his subjects round one common centre, and to inspire them with those sentiments of unity and nationality so essential to their independence, it would be criminal to rake up dormant passions by exposing names; and without such disclosure, it would be impossible to verify facts, or to rebut those malevolent assertions that have been so unsparingly heaped both on the British ministry and its agents. It becomes a duty, therefore, to leave this portion of the subject in that state of obscurity in which it has hitherto been involved. Besides, the acts of the British government require no

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\* Mr. Le Grelle, the burgomaster of Antwerp, one of the most devoted and honourable supporters of King Leopold's government, did not hesitate to declare in the chambers, that "he *hated revolutions* and revolutionists.

defence. Based on the broadest and soundest principles of regenerated policy—a policy not as heretofore narrow-minded and exclusively English, but essentially liberal and European—and having for its sole object the maintenance of peace, so far as that peace was compatible with the dignity and welfare of the British crown, those acts speak for themselves. The continued repose of Europe, and the increasing prosperity and extended franchises of the British people, are noble monuments that Lord Grey's administration raised to its domestic and foreign policy.

On the other hand, as regards Lord Ponsonby, it may be affirmed, that a consciousness of having dealt fairly and justly towards all parties, and of having honourably, zealously, and ably executed an arduous and intricate mission, will doubtless console him for the aspersions that have been levelled against him, no matter whence they spring. The passage that so feelingly terminates the fifth chapter of Mr. Nothomb's Essay, wherein he alludes to the death of General Belliard, may be adduced as a proof, that men the most competent to judge of the British envoy's conduct, knew how to appreciate its merits. "More fortunate than Lord Ponsonby," says the author, "General Belliard had not to complain of *public ingratitude*. Belgium, thankful for his services, promised him a monument. It was with regret that she saw herself deprived of his ashes."\* A more delicate and forcible mode of expressing a sense of Lord Ponsonby's services could not have been adopted, than by thus contrasting the posthumous honours conferred on the memory of the French general with the "*ingratitude*" displayed towards his British colleague, who had

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\* General Belliard died of apoplexy on the 28th of January, 1832.

zealously and cordially participated in his labours, and gone hand-in-hand with him on every occasion. If there be a term more strongly corroborative than another of individual merit, it is the acknowledgment that a man has been the victim of ingratitude.

Lord Ponsonby never made any secret of his policy, which was founded on the soundest and most enlightened views, both as regarded European and Belgian interests. His paramount object was the maintenance of a perfect harmony, not only between all the great powers, but especially between France and Great Britain. He was an advocate for the stability and splendour of the French throne, but an adversary to French aggrandizement abroad. He held the maintenance of general peace to be essential to the interests of Great Britain, and the welfare of all Europe. A restoration, or even *quasi* restoration, being found impracticable, he eagerly advocated the consolidation of Belgic independence on such solid and advantageous principles, as, by rendering her strong, prosperous, and contented, might gradually wean her from all foreign sympathies; and by arousing her self-love and nationality, thus render her an efficient moral substitute for that barrier, whose existence in a conjoint state had been declared impossible even by Lord Aberdeen.

As long as Lord Ponsonby thought there was a practicability of bringing back the Prince of Orange, without foreign war or internal anarchy, so long did he feel himself authorized in countenancing the partisans and advocates of that measure. In so doing he fulfilled the *undisguised* wishes of his government, and conciliated those of all the great powers; excepting, perhaps, France, whose secret aim was partition; until the election of Leopold opened the door to a matrimonial alliance between the Belgic monarch and the eldest

daughter of Louis Philippe. In acting thus, Lord Ponsonby made no mystery either of his own wishes or those of his government, nor neglected any fair opportunity of promoting the prince's cause ; not with his adherents, for that would have been superfluous, but with his opponents, whose hostility he ably sought to disarm. But as soon as the English envoy penetrated the haze of deception in which he was enveloped by the Orangists ; as soon as he was enabled to obtain a clear insight into the state of national feelings, and discovered that he had been deceived as to the strength of the prince's party ; that his royal highness's cause was essentially anti-popular ; that the force of his partisans lay in their tongues, not in their arms ; that the press and the public were irrevocably opposed to him, and that, if longer persisted in, the project would entail all those domestic and foreign calamities that he was bound to avert ; then, and then only, did he find himself imperatively called on to warn the Conference of the fallacy of the prince's hopes, and of the necessity of turning its attention to some other combination, which might effect the same purpose, without endangering the repose of Europe, or without rendering impracticable the final adjustment of the negotiations.

The tact, prudence, and humanity displayed by Lord Ponsonby at this critical juncture, was of no ordinary kind ; for a further adherence to the original plan, in lieu of benefitting the prince, would have accomplished the wishes of the anarchists and re-unionists. After inundating Belgium with civic blood, it would have thrown her prostrate and mutilated into the arms of France, and thence engendered a general conflagration. These were not hypothetical but infallible conclusions, borne out by the opinions of all the first statesmen of the day. That the re-unionists and movement party, or those to

whom bloodshed and convulsion are essential elements of existence, should be wrath at the destruction of their projects, can be well understood ; but that the Orangists, for the most part belonging to the hereditary or commercial aristocracy, should be blind to results fraught with such incalculable evils to themselves, is a proof of their ignorance of their own position, if not of their selfish indifference to the general welfare. Independent of all political motives, ancient sympathies rendered the support of the Prince of Orange's cause a congenial task to every Englishman. To abandon it was painful, but to pursue it would have been weak and criminal. Lord Ponsonby felt this acutely. But the necessity being flagrant, he did not hesitate to act upon it with promptitude and frankness. Policy pointed out the change, and humanity urged him to accelerate the operation. He did not balance a moment between the duty he owed his country and Europe, and the fear of drawing upon himself the rancour of contending factions. In order to insure success or avert disaster both in diplomacy and war, there are golden moments that must be seized with eagle rapidity, and acted on with unflinching energy. Lord Ponsonby adopted this maxim, and *peace was maintained*.

However much the Orangists might deplore the stern necessity that produced a change in the views of the Conference, they are the last persons who are entitled to reproach others with its creation. For it is incontestable that diplomacy did not renounce their cause until their cause had abandoned them ; until their lives and properties were on the very verge of destruction, and the tranquillity of Europe stood tottering on the brink of a fathomless abyss. The demon of war, a war of opinions and principles, already brandished his torch on high. The most trifling error might have shaken forth sparks, that

would have instantaneously ignited the mass of inflammable matter that lay ready for combustion ; and when once ignited, who could calculate its awful consequences ? Then, and then only, did Lord Ponsonby ably and rapidly grapple the sole substitute compatible with the demands of the Conference and the independence of Belgium ; and skilfully availing himself of the talents and honourable courage of Mr. Lebeau, devoted himself to the success of that combination which might be considered the last plank of safety for Belgium, and the only remaining anchor on which reposed the maintenance of general peace. The able publicist above quoted thus expresses himself on this point. “ Mr. Lebeau found a sincere and devoted auxiliary in a foreign diplomatist (Lord Ponsonby), who, despairing of establishing Belgic independence under a prince of the Dutch dynasty, embraced with ardour a combination that might preserve Belgium *as a barrier against France*, without the aid of a restoration.”

If any further proof were wanting of the policy and views of the Conference and its commissioner, it may be found in the instructions of the Prussian cabinet to Baron Bulow. “ Exert every nerve to bring back Belgium under the sceptre of King William,” said the Prussian foreign minister to his plenipotentiary in London ; “ but if this does not succeed, then endeavour to erect an independent kingdom under the Prince of Orange ; and if this also fail, then consent that Leopold should be king of the Belgians ; as, from his personal qualities and position in regard to the great powers, this prince offers the surest and most necessary guarantees (for the maintenance of peace).” \* Another

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\* Extract from a pamphlet entitled “ Noch ein Wort über die Belgisch-Hollandische Frage.”—Hamburgh, 1832. This able production is attributed to Baron Stockman.

passage from the same work, the author of which was profoundly initiated in all the secrets and mysteries of these negotiations, plainly shows the urgent light in which the plenipotentiaries regarded the question. "Two days before the departure of Leopold for Brussels, before the return of Baron de Weissenberg, who had been dispatched to the Hague, with the view of urging the King of the Netherlands to accept the eighteen articles, all the members of the Conference came to Marlborough House, and *unanimously* declared to the prince, that his acceptance of the Belgic throne was *the only means of rescuing Europe from the immense embarrassment in which it was plunged, and of securing that peace, which, without his acceptance, must be infallibly compromised.*"

The true motives for the animosity of the Orangists, re-unionists, and movement party against the British government may be summed up in a few words. The first, with a profound disregard to the moral and political condition of Europe, anxiously sought a restoration, or even a *quasi* restoration, no matter whether purchased by foreign invasion or by internal commotion; not from any direct attachment to the dynasty, but in order to recover that which they had lost, or to augment that which they had already gained by the revolution; for, as in the case of Baron Van der Smissen, Gregoire, and Borremans, many had attained rank and emoluments by the very process against which they were now conspiring. The second party, equally indifferent to general consequences, selfishly calculated that the benefits that might accrue to themselves individually by a return to France, would be an ample compensation for the misfortunes which would be entailed on the rest of their countrymen, by the general war which would be the inevitable result of any

direct attempts at re-union.\* The third party, and at one moment the most dangerous, had no other object than anarchy and confusion. Having hitherto gained nothing by the revolution, they were eager to excite universal commotion, that they might either rise to power, or falling, drag down others in the same frightful vortex with themselves. The prudent and courageous policy of Lebeau and his colleagues, seconded by Lord Ponsonby, annihilated the hopes of all these factions, and preserved Europe. Strong in the conviction of having been mainly instrumental in this great and good work, Lord Ponsonby, and those who co-operated with him, may support with indifference any calumnies that may be directed against them. Impartial posterity will render them justice, although it may be denied by prejudiced contemporaries. It is the common lot of the best and wisest.

After a convulsion so violent as that which had occurred in Belgium, a convulsion that had totally subverted all pre-existing institutions, it may be well imagined that the whole social system was shaken to its very foundation, and that the nation was not only plunged into an alarming state of commercial languor and depression, but that, being torn by intestine contentions, and a prey

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\* The town of Verviers, famous for its cloth manufactories, presented a petition to Congress on the 29th of December, 1830, praying for a re-union with France; the *Courrier Belge* of the 1st of January, 1831, thus notices this act:—"We do not contest the right of the petitioners to emit their opinions freely, but all Belgium will reserve to itself the right of appreciating and judging this step, and of condemning as bad citizens those who could not make the temporary sacrifice of some few commercial interests in favour of the future tranquillity and independence of our country." Again:—"Unhappy people! it is thus that a few egotists, in order to sell a little dearer a few yards of cloth or calico, a few quintals of iron or coal, would deliver us up like a vile herd!"



to all the uncertainties of political strife, the utmost misery prevailed among those classes, who, living from hand to mouth, draw their diurnal subsistence from the speculation of the trader, or from the luxurious exigencies of the aristocracy. Great misery did in fact exist, and, however incredible it may appear, this very misery was stated to have formed one of the auxiliaries relied on by the extreme factions, as the means of stimulating the masses to espouse their cause. It was argued by the one, that the stagnation of industry and trade would soon become insupportable, and the general discontent so intense, as to render a return to the old government an indispensable alternative ; while the others, speculating on the ignorance and passions of the multitude, calculated that it would be still more easy to urge them forward in the path of confusion, when excited by the miseries caused by want of employment.

But, as it often occurs in cases of public and private distress, the greatest sufferers were not those who were the most clamorous. For the loss falling upon the merchant and tradesman, was thence reflected on the artisans and operatives, who bore their privations with exemplary patience. Indeed, throughout the revolution, it was the men of this class that may be said to have evinced the greatest degree of self-abnegation and patriotism. Tools in the hands of others, they bled and suffered without the slightest hope of compensation or amelioration for themselves. The loudest declaimers were the aristocracy and landholders, who, with the exception of such proprietors of forests as derived their principal revenue from supplying fuel to the furnaces and forges of Namur, Liege, and Luxembourg, had little cause for complaint. The demand for agricultural produce was greater than had ever been known in any previous year ; and the consequent prices of grain, cattle, and forage, as

well as the value of land, had greatly augmented. The producer was thus enriched, while the consumer alone suffered. Indeed, it is a notorious fact, that such was the improvement in the condition of the farmer, so great the demand, so advantageous the sale, and, by a fortunate coincidence, so abundant the harvest, that many tenants who had not paid their rents during two or three years, were suddenly enabled to acquit all arrears. In short, in proportion as commerce and trade declined, so the value of the land augmented ; for those who under other circumstances would have been inclined to embark their fortunes or accumulations in mercantile speculations, now sought to invest them elsewhere.

The effects of the revolution were in fact scarcely felt by the agricultural interests ; the whole onus unfortunately fell on those who contributed most largely to the welfare of kingdoms, that is, on the commercial classes. The spurious prosperity resulting from the system of the "million of industry" now rapidly began to develop itself. Factory after factory, furnace after furnace, and steam-engine after steam-engine closed their doors, extinguished their fires, or diminished their hours of labour. The produce, which under the ancient government had far exceeded the healthy wants of the market, was now deprived of the artificial demand of the society of commerce, and thence of its principal issue. There was already an accumulated glut, which it would have been madness to augment. Reduction of labour became indispensable ; thus, amongst many others, our enterprising countryman Mr. John Cockerell, whose magnificent establishments at Seraing, near Liege, were the admiration of all strangers, was reduced to great straits, and was constrained to discharge the greater portion of his workmen, of whom upwards of 2,500 were employed at the moment of the revolution. Hundreds at Ghent,

Tournay, Liege, Namur, and Brussels were also thrown out of employment, and their families compelled to seek parochial assistance. The immense demand for agricultural produce took off some superfluous hands, while the augmentation of the army removed others : but this was but a trifling relief in a country where the cotton trade alone had occupied upwards of "250,000 hands."\*

The misery was great, the prospect melancholy, the danger imminent; yet, by a most extraordinary anomaly, those crimes which result from necessity, from the outcries of famishing children, from the agonies of cold, hunger, and sickness, were not sensibly augmented; nor did they bear any proportion to the increased suffering of the lower classes in the manufacturing towns. Indeed, it is a fact worthy of remark, that the number of crimes committed during the first six months of the revolution, were much less than those perpetrated during the same space at any previous given period. Not only did the stagnation of commerce weigh heavily on the general merchant, but the dislocation of society deeply affected the retail traders in the capital. Numbers of those who had hitherto mainly relied on the court, aristocracy, and on the mass of foreigners, especially English, who flocked to Brussels, were now compelled to abandon their shops, or live on their capital. Strange, however, as it may appear, although this numerous class had every cause for abhorring the revolution, and every rational motive for desiring a restoration, at no time were the Orangist leaders enabled to seduce them into active co-operation. Whether they dreaded the vengeance of the association, or whether their thirst for national independence was greater than the sense of their

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\* Petition of the Ghent cotton manufacturers to King Leopold, January 18, 1834.

own private interest, matters little. Whatever might have been their secret and individual views—and that these views were generally favourable to the Prince of Orange, cannot be denied—still they could not be induced to express such wishes collectively, that is, either by electing Orange candidates to congress, or by lending the slightest aid in promoting those scenes of confusion which they had the good sense to see must result from openly espousing the cause of the deposed dynasty. Six months' experience had taught them the misfortune of civil commotion. All they now sighed for was a return to that tranquillity, without which trade cannot exist.

It has been said that the extreme factions, that is, the Orangists and movement party, speculated on the distresses of the people as an auxiliary to their respective causes. "All means are equally good in times of revolution; no matter what the lever, provided it produces the required impetus," is the common maxim of agitators of every country. That *they* should reckon upon such assistance, will create no surprise; but to attribute a policy so machiavelian and unfeeling to the great Orange families, would be bold and unwarrantable, were not the accusation founded on circumstantial evidence of a very striking nature.

It is almost superfluous to state, that the greater portion of the workmen, and, indeed, of the indigent classes in all capitals and large towns, derive their subsistence from the residence and expenditure of the rich and luxurious. It is not so much the necessities as the superfluities of life that are the great sources of prosperity to the artisan. The Belgic aristocracy, the most wealthy of whom, with few exceptions, appertained to the Orangist party, were at all times remarkable for their frugal habits, for their overweening fondness for money, for a disinclination to that frank

and generous hospitality, that liberality and profusion that characterize the nobility of Paris, London, and other capitals. More intent on husbanding their fortunes than on contributing to the conviviality of their equals, or the prosperity of their inferiors, they generally practised a degree of economy bordering on parsimony, and rarely displaying any symptoms of splendour or profusion.

This organic disposition, a species of moral heirloom, might, however, be ascribed to the constant political changes to which the country had been subject for so many ages; changes that not only deprived it of name and nationality, but had gone far to stifle those feelings of unity and patriotism that are so essentially characteristic of the old Netherlanders. Alternately called upon to swear allegiance to Spain, Austria, France, and Holland, bandied about from one power to another, according to the issue of battles, of which their own estates were too frequently the theatre; having constantly suffered from the past, and having little to hope from the future, homogeneity and confidence were destroyed among the aristocracy, who treated their country as a *mere savings-bank*, and felt themselves as imperatively called on to guard against political hurricanes, as the West Indian planter against those of the elements. Thus, that frugality which had its source in politics, eventually became a national type.

The revolution afforded this class an admirable pretext for indulging in their natural habits of economy; producing thereby the double result of improving their fortunes by accumulated saving, and increasing the misery and discontent of the lower orders, and the embarrassment of the city authorities, by reducing the demand for labour, as well as the produce of municipal dues (*octroi*), portions of which were allotted to the

maintenance of the poor. The better to effect this, the majority of the nobility withdrew into foreign countries, or immured themselves in their chateaux ; whilst those who returned to the capital closed their gates, removed their furniture, inhabited a mere corner of their mansions, put down their equipages, discharged many of their domestics, and confined their expenditure within the strict limits of necessity.

It may be objected that these were not times for the display of wealth or luxury ; that at a moment when civil convulsion might have suddenly cast men down from opulence to penury, it was more than ever necessary to lay by a store for the morrow.

It was said that the people, being the artisans of the revolution, and of their own consequent sufferings, had no claims on the support of the aristocracy, or of those that were attached to the ancient government. If, therefore, by augmenting the temporary privations of the poor and middling classes, they could have been brought to compare the blessings they had lost with the pains they actually endured, and thus have been induced to pronounce themselves for a restoration, or for the Prince of Orange, it would have been an immense benefit conferred on the country at large, and would have fulfilled the vows of all European cabinets. Granted. But, had the persons who held these arguments studied the history of popular commotions, or even of human nature, they would have discovered that the sufferings generally attendant on civil strife and social disorganization have always been more instrumental to the progress of anarchy than to a return to order.

Even as those who are the victims of physical intemperance too frequently fly to further indulgence as a relief from present pain, so the lower classes, when

inflamed by political excess, of which they feel the effects without comprehending the causes or consequences, are infinitely more prone to rush forward in the course of subversion, than to retrace their steps to that of moderation. The natural obstinacy and tendency of man to mischief and misrule are additional incentives. Thus, in the midst of the general suffering, the Orangist party were unable, either through the medium of gold or intrigue, to excite the masses in their favour; whilst the patriotic association always found in them ready instruments, either for attempting to overawe Congress by vociferous clamours, or for executing any other schemes that accorded with their own views.\*

Fortunately for the Orangists—for, they being wealthy and anti-popular, would have been the first victims—the patience of the people, and the charitable exertions of the majority of the citizens, averted the evils that might otherwise have arisen. Private donations to a large amount were distributed by the patriot nobles, by the clergy, and, indeed, by all such persons whose means admitted of their affording relief to the sufferers. Loans were also raised by the municipalities; public employment was given to all labourers out of work, and thus the industrious were furnished with subsistence, and the profligate deprived of all pretext for idleness. A sum exceeding 100,000 florins was thus expended by the regency of Brussels during the first six months of the revolution. The venerable burgo-master, Rouppe, with many others of the respectable citizens, displayed a degree of philanthropy and devo-

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\* The detestable pillage of the Orangists on the 6th of April, 1834, and the disorders committed at Brussels, fully corroborate the foregoing observations.—[NOTE OF ED.]

tion during this crisis, that afforded a noble example to their fellow-countrymen.

On passing through the rich and luxuriant plains of this fertile country, on whose soil Providence had for ages showered down its choicest blessings, as some compensation for the evils inflicted on it by the ambition of man, the traveller would have discovered no symptoms of the tempest that had overwhelmed the throne, or even of that civil strife which was still fiercely gnawing its vitals, and menacing it with misfortunes still more poignant than it had ever endured from previous convulsions. All was calm, cheerful, and apparently prosperous. An air of consummate abundance, ease, and happiness reigned around. But on reaching the capital, the scene changed. There Brussels still stood, in all that graceful and picturesque beauty that renders it so pre-eminent among continental cities; but the immense change that had been operated in its social condition was visible even to the naked eye. There was a general anxiety and want of confidence depicted in all men's countenances. Neighbour looked askance at neighbour; friends were averse to trust in friends. The very right eye seemed to suspect the left. All professed independence and disinterestedness, and yet thirst for place, and jealousy against those in office, never was carried to a greater pitch.

The streets were dull and lifeless; the public walks and thoroughfares were nearly abandoned, or only animated by gesticulating groups of politicians. The wealthier classes appeared to have abandoned the city and surrendered it to the poor, hundreds of whom, especially females, obtruded themselves on the passenger. The mansions of the aristocracy were closed, whilst advertisements upon almost every door announced "a house abandoned," or "to let." Public vehicles now and



then traversed the streets, but not a single private equipage. The very grass commenced growing in the squares, in the centre of which half-withered trees of liberty, surmounted with tattered caps and banners, reared their unsightly heads. There was no society—no cordiality; all was uncertainty and alarm. Rumours of intended riots agitated the tranquil citizens by day, whilst shouts and vociferations disturbed their repose at night. The sittings of the congress were often turbulent and disorderly; now disturbed by the groans or plaudits of the galleries, or now interrupted by the exaggerated declamation of orators, who, in order to strengthen their arguments, not unfrequently appealed to the passions of the spectators. Agents of the Parisian jacobinical society mingled in the groups both in and out of the chambers, menacing and insulting the deputies. Business was carried on, but the goods exposed in the shops were deficient in novelty and splendour. There was a demand for the necessities, but none for the luxuries or superfluities of life. Forced loans and contributions weighed heavily on the burghers, whose sufferings, from these and other causes, were augmented by incessant military lodgments. Brussels, from its central situation, being the rendezvous or place of transit for almost all the troops, scarcely a day elapsed without officers and soldiers, oftentimes exigent and ill-conducted, being quartered on the inhabitants.\*

Men's minds were so completely absorbed by the overwhelming interests of the day, that all subjects

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\* Householders in affluent circumstances generally gave the men a sum of money to enable them to furnish themselves with lodgings and food elsewhere; but this could not be the case with the middling classes. The absolute expenditure for each soldier was about seventy cents per day—that of an officer, from six to ten francs. A portion of this was returned by the authorities.

save those connected with politics were excluded. Arts and sciences were neglected, and no literature thought of but the public journals. The avidity with which men sought to fortify their individual hopes or opinions by those of the daily press, was not less remarkable than the immense influence obtained by the latter. Yet a part of these journals were supported and edited by foreigners, who, utterly regardless of Belgic interests, had embraced journalism as a mere pecuniary or political speculation. The ascendancy of these papers over the public mind was not less prejudicial than extensive. For one argument tending to the maintenance of peace, or evincing any acquaintance with the true principles of European policy, fifty were subversive, visionary, and utterly opposed to those maxims which form the basis of social order. Both writers and readers, unable to discriminate between the uses and abuses of a free press, fell into the opposite extremes of excessive licentiousness or excessive timidity. The one, unrestrained by law, or any other consideration than that of personal chastisement, launched into the most unwarrantable excesses; the other, especially such as were in office, being unaccustomed to those attacks which are so incessantly directed against public men in England, trembled lest their words and actions should be misinterpreted, or that they should be held up as objects of sarcasm, calumny, and perhaps persecution. Scarcely one public individual was exempt from this weakness, except Mr. Lebeau, who, from the first moment that he raised himself above the level of the common political horizon, displayed the utmost moral courage and manly indifference to the insults and libels that were levelled against him.

The most salient defects in the conduct of Belgic journalists were, firstly, an erroneous impression entertained

by them that it was necessary always to oppose government, in order to prove their own independence; and, secondly, their forgetfulness of their true position in regard to other states. In almost every point connected with European policy, they argued as if Belgium was paramount, and Europe secondary. They treated the questions of territory and external relations, as if they were a power of the first order, and other nations a mere assemblage of petty states, destined to receive laws at their hands. Eager to be admitted into the general family pact, they repudiated the maxims that were acknowledged and adopted by all other nations as the essential conditions of co-existence. That which Great Britain, Austria, and Prussia considered as honourable to themselves, they declared to be degrading to their country. Regardless of all interests but their own, they objected to the smallest concession, and yet demanded sacrifices from others, not as a boon, but as a right. Forgetting the exiguity of their numbers, their intestine divisions, and the absence of every essential even for defence, they boasted of their strength, unity, and powers of aggression, and talked of battles and campaigns, as though the grand army had been at their disposal.

It is true they held the torch of discord suspended, like the sword of Damocles, over Europe. They might have plunged into war, and constrained France to fly to their assistance; but they forgot that the first bound of the lion would have been upon the carcass of their own country, on which it would have gorged and batted ere it advanced to the Rhine. Whether victors or vanquished, the result must have been equally disastrous to them. The inevitable consequence of war was either an exchange of foreign rulers, or a return to the very chains they had so recently burst asunder.

In speaking of the general condition of Brussels at

this period, a few words respecting the civic guards are essential. This class of armed citizens received a definite organization by a law of the 31st of December, 1830, by which it was enacted, that all persons, with some few exceptions, between the age of twenty and fifty inclusive, should be liable to this service, under fine and penalty. They were divided into three classes; the first, comprised of all bachelors and childless widowers, between the age of twenty and thirty-one, was subject to be called into active service; the second, consisting of all persons of the same class between the age of thirty-one and fifty, was destined for garrison duty; and the third, comprehending all individuals indiscriminately between twenty and fifty, to be exclusively sedentary. In the event of being called into active service by legislative sanction, the first ban was placed on the same footing, as to pay and discipline, as the line. The officers and non-commissioned, exclusive of commanders, to be elected by their comrades; a system well adapted, perhaps, during peace, but highly prejudicial to discipline when on active service.

No opportunity has been afforded for judging of the utility of the first ban of Belgic civic guards, since they were subjected to regular organization; for the law as regarded them was not put in force till after the Dutch invasion. But there is every ground for believing that, in case of necessity, they would do their duty before an enemy, as well as the troops of the line, to whom they are generally superior in physical appearance, and not much inferior in point of equipment and discipline. The utter inutility of employing the undisciplined bands for any other purpose than local duty, was sorrowfully proved by the disasters of August, 1831. The bombastic reliance placed on this species of force by some members of the Belgic congress, showed their

utter ignorance of military science. No sophism, no theory can destroy the practical conclusions of experience. Ancient and modern history abound with examples. It is incontestable that without discipline there can be no unity, without unity no force, and without force no triumph. Even valour, however ardent or chivalrous, is an ineffectual substitute. If a nation were to rely on legions of this description for its defence against a well-organized enemy, its fate would be similar to that of Belgium in 1831. A few regular battalions would suffice to overthrow a host. On the other hand, give these masses the organization and pay of the line, and you destroy their civic character and independence, and assimilate them at once to standing armies.

For external defence, in their crude form, national guards are useless, and for internal protection, their utility is problematical. Disorders were often indisputably averted at Brussels during the first six months of the revolution, by the firmness of these burgher militia; and it is incontestable that the repose of Paris has been maintained, since the July revolution, by the same class of citizens. But when order can be maintained, so can it be subverted by the same means; and it becomes a fearful and precarious position, when the existence of a government or dynasty, or even the security of private property, hangs on the will of an armed people. Such dependence is a mere inversion of military despotism. The moral distinction between regular soldiers and national guards with arms in their hands, is so trifling as to render them nearly similar in effect. Bring masses together by battalions or corps, and they must act from one impulse, or they would fall into inextricable confusion. There must be temporary obedience and docility, though there be no discipline or

instruction ; and as the mind of man is prone to yield to enthusiasm or example, and to be led away by the fascinations of superior intellect, these citizen soldiers may become more dangerous to freedom in the hands of designing persons. than regular armies in those of absolute governments. Let an ambitious and able leader, no matter whether he be a prince or fortunate soldier, gain over these bands, and he may convert them into the direst instruments of despotism. It is a trite axiom that “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.” This may be applied to the national guards, for when the people are taught to legislate with arms in their hands ; when those whom it were best to keep in utter ignorance of military science, and of the immense power derived from unity, are initiated into the elements of their own force, and supplied with the means of applying it, the danger not only to governments, but to public liberty, must be imminent. Place arms in the hands of the whole male population of Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow ; teach them to close, wheel, and deploy ; try the same experiment in London—and the trade-unions would be quickly converted into an overwhelming power, that would render all constitutional government or legal authority utterly impracticable. The day is yet far distant, it is to be hoped, when the innovation will be introduced into Great Britain.\*

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\* These lines were scarcely dry ere the disgraceful scenes of pillage and disorder of the 8th of April, 1834, took place at Brussels. On this occasion the civic guard, though legally summoned, almost unanimously *refused* to take up arms in defence of the property of their outraged fellow-citizens, that is, so long as the rioters confined their attacks to the Orangists.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE BELGIANS DECIDE ON PROCEEDING TO THE ELECTION OF A SOVEREIGN—COLONEL ACHILLE MURAT—CANDIDATES FOR THE THRONE — THE CHOICE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE DUKES OF LEUCHTENBERG AND NEMOURS—POLICY AND INTRIGUES OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO INSURE THE ELECTION OF THE DUKE DE NEMOURS—CONDUCT OF LORD PONSONBY AND M. BRESSON UPON THIS OCCASION—LETTERS AND NOTES FROM COUNT SEBASTIANI — THE DUKE OF LEUCHTENBERG, THE POPULAR CANDIDATE, PROPOSED BY MR. LEBEAU AND SEVENTY-FIVE DEPUTIES — THE MARQUIS DE LA WOESTINE ARRIVES AT BRUSSELS — THE DUKE OF NEMOURS ELECTED—A DEPUTATION FROM THE BELGIC CONGRESS PROCEEDS TO PARIS—THE CROWN REJECTED BY LOUIS PHILIPPE—ORANGIST MOVEMENTS—CONSPIRACY OF GREGOIRE AT GHENT DEFEATED BY THE ENERGY OF VAN DE POEL—GREGOIRE LIBERATED—VAN SPEYK'S DEATH.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, in the whole history of these times more remarkable than the circumstances attending the first efforts of the Belgians to determine the question of sovereignty. But the nation was so well convinced of the urgent necessity of putting an end to the intrigues of contending factions, it was so wearied with the uncertainty of its position, and so apprehensive of falling into complete anarchy, that it unanimously applauded the resolution of congress to bring matters to a speedy issue.

Diplomacy alone regretted this determination, and sought to throw obstacles in the way of immediate solution; but from motives so widely different, as to threaten an interruption to the continuance of that mutual good understanding which was the avowed object of the great powers. Russia, in the first place, though on the eve of commencing the bloody struggle which was destined to rivet more securely the chains of

unhappy Poland, never for a moment abandoned her hopes of Dutch restoration, and consequently instructed her plenipotentiaries in Paris and London to avail themselves of every possible artifice by which time could be gained. Austria and Prussia, though more sincere in their intentions, and more interested in the maintenance of peace, followed the same track, until the utter impracticability of success pointed out the necessity of turning their attention to less chimerical projects. Secondly, England, though acknowledging the impossibility even of an indirect restoration, still eagerly clung to the cause of the Prince of Orange, and was, therefore, extremely adverse to a solution that must be fatal to her favourite candidate. Thirdly, the situation of Europe was so critical, and the prospect of averting war so precarious, that France courted delay in order that she might dart forward on the first signal of hostilities, and possess herself of what the movement party persisted in considering her natural boundaries, and this without the embarrassment of negotiation or alliance, or even the necessity of conquest. For it is scarcely necessary to observe, that had war broken out before the election of a sovereign, or had the aggressive doctrines of which La Fayette, Lemarque, and Maugin were the apostles, prevailed over the pacific system determined upon by Louis Philippe, and so wisely supported by Casimir Perier and his colleagues, the whole Belgic people would have eagerly thrown themselves into the arms of France; and the wish for a reunion, hitherto confined to certain isolated fractions, would have become general and simultaneous. It was, therefore, the evident interest and policy of Great Britain and of Prussia, to accelerate, and not to impede, the election of a sovereign.

The difficulty did not, however, consist so much in the admission of this principle, as in the choice of a fit



person to fill the new throne. All were unanimous as to the point of exclusion, whilst they differed as to the individual selection. The most appropriate choice for all parties would, doubtless, have been Prince Leopold, of Saxe-Cobourg; but the motives that induced Great Britain to desire delay, influenced her at that moment in discouraging all overtures regarding that prince, whose name had already been suggested both to the British envoy at Brussels and to the government at home. The jealousy then entertained towards England by the French liberals was likewise an obstacle to a combination, which, in fact, was skilfully reserved for a future and more propitious occasion.

An immense step towards the preservation of harmony had, however, been effected by extending the exclusive *veto*, not only to “*any prince of the families reigning in the five states, whose representatives were assembled in London in Conference*,”\* but to the Duke of Leuchtenburg.† The consanguinity of the latter to Napoleon’s family was calculated to revive the intrigues of the imperialists, and to fill Belgium with the partisans of a dynasty who were far from having renounced their pretensions to the French sceptre. Indeed, the hopes of this party were at one moment so strongly excited, that even Colonel Achille Murat, eldest son of the chivalrous ex-king of Naples, was induced to quit his retirement in the United States, and to try the general pulse by entering the Belgic service. Others of the same family also endeavoured to obtain a revocation of the edict of banishment from France, and threw out hints of transferring their residence to Brussels. The striking personal resemblance between Colonel Murat

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\* Protocol 14, 1st of February, 1831.

† Auguste Charles Eugene Napoleon, son of Prince Eugene (Beauharnois), born 9th of December, 1810, now Prince Auguste of Portugal, married to Dona Maria.

and his mighty relation the emperor Napoleon—a resemblance which he appeared to encourage by his style of dress and general bearing—his undoubted abilities, courage, and extraordinary proficiency in almost all modern languages, were well calculated to produce effect in troubled times. But the sympathy that the name of Murat might have awakened in the bosom of a few veterans and refugee Italians, finding no echo with the people, and his vicinity having excited the jealousies of the French court, Colonel Murat resigned the command of the foreign legion, with which he had been entrusted during a few weeks, and quitted the Continent.\*

The remonstrances or intrigues of the different cabinets were, however, inefficient barriers to the impatience of the Belgians. Therefore, on the 19th of January, after several days' preparatory debate as to the question of urgency, the day for final election was irrevocably fixed by congress for the 28th. In the same sitting it was resolved, that the Belgic legation at Paris should consult the French cabinet "as to various commercial and political points connected with the choice of a sovereign," while a similar proposition regarding Great Britain was unceremoniously rejected; a gratuitous and impolitic act of discourtesy to England—for, unless the Belgic deputies had blinded themselves to their real position and future interests, they would have comprehended that any attempt to excite rivalry between the cabinets of St. James's and the Tuileries, must recoil on themselves; and that the very existence and consolidation of

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\* As Colonel Murat did not arrive in Belgium until after the election of King Leopold, the author may be accused of a trifling anachronism; but the primitive object is not affected by this transposition. Colonel Murat has since returned to his estate in America, where he was seen lately, exercising the modest functions of post-master of the adjacent town.

that national independence of which they appeared so jealous, depended on the maintenance of a perfect accord between England and France. To interrupt that harmony was the grand object of their adversaries. Had they succeeded, reunion or restoration were inevitable. Fortunately, however, for Europe and Belgium, the bond which the great powers had entered into, a bond which has been well designated as “a virtuous conspiracy to avert war,” acted as an efficient counterpoise to the feverish impolicy of the Belgic deputies; whose resolution was the more uncalled for, since they had already determined to gratify their own inclinations in the choice of a monarch, in despite of friendly counsels and hostile warnings.

No sooner was the question of “the choice of a chief of the state” seriously agitated, than a host of competitors for royal honours were introduced to public notice. The pretenders, most of whose names were brought forward without their previous knowledge or acquiescence, were nearly as numerous as the deputies destined to elect them. France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium each contributed its quota. Petitions were presented to congress on the 27th of January in favour of La Fayette, Fabvier, Sebastiani, Chateaubriand, the Prince of Carignan, the Archduke Charles, Surlet de Chokier, Charles Rogier, *the Pope*, Felix de Merode, Prince Otho of Bavaria, Duke John of Saxony, a prince of Salm, the Dukes of Nemours and Leuchtenberg, and even Louis Philippe with a vice-royalty. Independent of these, the names of the Dukes of Lucca and Reichstadt, and the Prince of Capua, brother of the King of the Two Sicilies, were also suggested. The choice of the latter was seriously contemplated by the French cabinet, and even recommended by Prince Talleyrand, but the Belgians never evinced the slightest predilection for him; and though he was not absolutely objection-

able to the four great powers, he possessed few of those essential qualifications required by the concluding paragraph of the twelfth protocol. Had the Belgians shewn any decided eagerness to elect Prince Otho of Bavaria, it is probable that he would have been recognized forthwith by England, Prussia, and France, and\* that he would have obtained the hand of the Princess Mary, third daughter of Louis Philippe. But the youth of this prince, who had not then accomplished his fifteenth year, was a sufficient motive for his rejection. Indeed nothing could be more impolitic than to trust the government of a country emerging from a state of civil convulsion to a minor, when the experience and energies of maturer age were so imperatively called for.

In the meantime, while the claims of some of the popular candidates, especially those of the Duke of Leuchtenberg, were warmly advocated by the daily press, others, and amongst these a prince of the insignificant mediatized house of Salm,\* endeavoured to attract public attention by hand-bills or advertisements posted on the walls, in which he tendered his services as a prince fully qualified to insure the prosperity and independence of the Belgians, and to reconcile the views of the great powers. But by one of those capricious contradictions that gave such a singular character to the events of this period, all this body of ephemeral competitors for the thorny glories of royalty were abandoned on the eve of election, save the very two whom the great powers had expressly excluded. A singular alternative; for, as Mr. Nothomb has justly observed, “the Duke of Leuchtenberg was essentially anti-French without being European, while the Duke of Nemours was so exclusively French as to be directly anti-European.”

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\* Prince Frederick Ernest Otho Philip, of Salm Kyrbourg, of Aahaus in Westphalia.

Both were consequently declared inadmissible by the Conference. The Belgians could not plead ignorance; for although the protocols of the first and seventh of February were posterior to the election, they were warned by M. Bresson, up to the moment when he received instructions to encourage the choice of the Duke of Nemours. They were assured of the same fact by Lord Ponsonby, from the first hour the question was agitated, down to the moment that the ultimate refusal of Louis Philippe opened the eyes of the most incredulous. The language of Lord Ponsonby, which was wilfully misrepresented by both parties, never varied—it was essentially and unequivocally negative, without a moment's intermission. The name of the Archduke Charles of Austria was likewise brought forward; but, independent of his imperial highness being directly affected by the exclusive prohibition of the fourteenth protocol, he could only be considered as a cloak for the partisans of the Prince of Orange, and for those who, being intimately convinced of the non-acceptance or non-recognition of the other two, voted in his favour, in order to reduce the amount of the absolute majority that might pronounce itself for either one or the other.

The combination in favour of the son of the illustrious Eugene, in a great measure the creation of Mr. Lebeau, was proposed by him, and advocated by almost all the moderate liberals, and those who might be considered most frankly attached to the independence of their country. The French re-unionists, including the few republicans, and a portion of the Catholic party, rallied round the Duke of Nemours, whose sovereignty, had it been peaceably recognized, would have been equivalent to a French vice-royalty—with this important difference, that in lieu of admitting the Belgians to a participation in the honours and advantages of an integral incorpora-

tion with France, would have subjected Belgium to be inundated by a multitude of French placemen, and thus renewed one of the principal grievances complained of under the Netherlands government.

As the period of the election approached, the conduct of the French cabinet, which had hitherto been manly and honourable, gave rise to severe criticisms, and was to all appearance tainted with insincerity and a desire to abandon its pledges. It was accused of secretly intriguing to insure the election of the Duke of Nemours, whilst it solemnly professed to the great powers and to the Belgian agents not to countenance that combination. It declined to subscribe to the protocol affecting the territorial limits of a country of which it might become possessor by vote or by war, on the plea that the Conference was a "mediation;" and yet it preremptorily intervened, by opposing the election of the popular candidate. It disavowed all views of aggrandizement, and proclaimed the utmost sympathy for Belgium; and yet it wilfully created obstacles to the immediate adjustment of the question—obstacles calculated to produce anarchy, and to throw that country, wearied and exhausted, into its arms.

Some of these accusations were, doubtless, well-founded; but the critical position of France at home must be admitted as an extenuation of her dubious conduct abroad. She may be said to have been living from hand to mouth, uncertain of the morrow. Dependent on the force of events, which often hold dominion over systems—and at the mercy of popular will, which had well nigh been superior to that of the government; bounding, as it were, from riot to riot, she lived but in the intervals; and unless the July throne had carried its self-abnegation to imprudent extremes, or been prepared to follow the destinies of

the doctrinaires, it was a duty it owed itself to be prepared for that aggressive system which would have been infallibly forced upon it, had the movement party gained the ascendancy. It is evident that its object in promoting the choice of the Duke of Nemours, after repeated assurances of opposing such election, was not undertaken with the ultimate view of acceptance, but in order to prevent the success of the Duke of Leuchtenberg, whose vicinity was considered dangerous to the internal repose of France and the consolidation of the new dynasty. In the position in which the cabinet of the Palais Royal found itself, and under the irrevocable determination formed by the king not to accept the crown for his son, the election must be considered as a fine stroke of policy. It averted a great and immediate evil, and afforded time for the consideration of a more congenial combination, which only required development and skilful management to ensure success.

By refusing to adhere to the protocol of the 27th, under the plea of the Conference being "a mediation," and at the same time directly intervening by denouncing the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg as an act of hostility to France, it was guilty of a palpable contradiction. But had it remained neuter—had the Belgians, who were deaf to advice and remonstrances, not been menaced, the son of Beauharnais would have been elected by a large majority. France must then have drawn the sword, or submitted to the neighbourhood of a monarch, who, rallying round his throne all the discontented spirits of Europe, would have been a perpetual firebrand at her threshold, and, without offering the smallest guarantee to Europe, would have been a source of uneasiness and embarrassment; in fact, a mere tool in the hands of internal and external enemies. In the then social and moral con-

dition of that country, it would have been better for Louis Philippe to have abdicated the throne, or to have thrown his armies into Belgium, than to admit the contact of so dangerous a neighbour. Delays were certainly perilous ; anarchy might and would infallibly have ensued had these delays been prolonged ; latent thoughts of conquest or partition may have lurked behind ; the bait was tempting and difficult to resist in despite of the immense concomitant risks. Subsequent events have proved, however, that the professions of the French government were sincere and honourable. At all events, since Belgium has obtained nearly all she was entitled to demand, and as France has zealously co-operated in maintaining peace, it would be unjust to inculcate the motives of its government.

In advocating the cause of his favourite candidate, its talented proposer observed that only three combinations were practicable, namely, the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Nemours, and the Duke of Leuchtenberg. "The first," said he, "will entail civil war; the second general and immediate war; but with the third, there is at the utmost a mere possibility of the latter. Two causes, may, nevertheless, produce an immediate conflagration. The one certain—that is, a direct or indirect union with France; the other problematical—that is, a struggle between the principles of liberty and servitude." Meaning by the latter the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg in defiance of French menaces, or the abandonment of his cause in submission to the right of intervention. As regarded the Prince of Orange, who was unsupported by a single man of energy or talent, while the whole force of the revolution rallied around his competitors, and as related to any direct or indirect union with France, the above conclusions were essentially correct; but it may be objected that the



hypothesis of the two last princes, as connected with the question of war, ought to have been reversed.

The simple fact of the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg would have rendered it imperative on France to act up to her declarations, under the penalty of betraying a dangerous feebleness. If she did not declare immediate war, she must have renounced all amicable relations with Belgium, and withdrawn her plenipotentiary from the Conference, and thus impeded the march of those negotiations, on the solution of which depended the repose of the Continent. On the other hand, the acceptance of the Duke of Nemours never having been seriously contemplated, his mere election offered no impediment to the maintenance of a good understanding between the powers. It not only afforded the French government a favourable opportunity of trying its own strength at home, but of proving its moderation and disinterestedness abroad, and thereby fortifying itself in the opinion of foreign cabinets. Immense clamour was raised throughout Belgium at what was denominated the weakness of Louis Philippe, and the duplicity of his ministers. But men judged from the excited passions of the moment, and not from the dictates of reason, or from any profound calculation of political chances. The six days' debates on this question scarcely produced one single political prophecy borne out by subsequent events. All seemed bewildered in a maze of theory, utterly opposed to the experience of the past or the probabilities of the future.

Until within a few days of the time appointed for final discussion, the French government appears to have acted in perfect concordance with the general views of the allies. Indeed, as late as the 11th of January, M. Bresson addressed a note to the president of the Belgic diplomatic committee, stating that the election of the Duke of

Leuchtenberg would throw Belgium into great embarrassment, and that this prince would not be recognized by the great powers, and on no account whatever by France. "I must add," said M. Bresson, "that his majesty having repeatedly manifested his intention neither to consent to the union of Belgium with France, nor to the election of the Duke of Nemours, all perseverance in questions already decided will have no other result than to agitate Belgium, and to endanger the peace of Europe, which his majesty is desirous of maintaining."

Similar language had been invariably held in answer to all previous endeavours to induce the French cabinet to deviate from its determination. The first of these measures, that is the re-union, had never been put forward in an official or collective form, or sanctioned by national appeal. But had the French government not been restrained by an earnest desire to avert war, it might easily have availed itself of the importunities of the Belgic emissaries, and, following the example of Danton and the Convention of 1793, it might have interpreted the private wishes of Mr. Gendebien, the Coryphæus of the re-unionists, as the voice of the whole nation. Although Gendebien had been encouraged in his favourite speculation by La Fayette, Lamarque, and the principal movement leaders; and although the partisans of the Duke of Leuchtenberg were secretly supported by the Duke of Bassano and others, connected by ties of ancient sympathy with the family of Prince Eugene, both Louis Philippe and his ministers, and indeed all persons appertaining to the administration, unhesitatingly rejected every overture tending to compromise European tranquillity.

A letter addressed to his government on the 9th of January, by Mr. Firmin Rogier, the Belgic diplomatic agent at Paris, places this matter in a still stronger light.

It was stated therein that Count Sebastiani had peremptorily declared, "that the objections of the king were irrevocable; that France would never recognize the Duke of Leuchtenberg as King of Belgium, nor Louis Philippe ever give him one of his daughters in marriage; and that his majesty did not hesitate to say that of all possible combinations, that of the young Duke of Leuchtenberg would be the most disagreeable to France, and the least favourable to the repose and independence of Belgium." The private dispatch from whence the above passage is extracted, and which contained other observations equally positive in regard to the Duke of Nemours, was not intended for publication. But with that puerile thirst for publicity, that impolitic indiscretion, and total disregard to diplomatic usages, which characterized the proceedings of the Belgic government and representatives of that period, the letter was read to the chambers, and thence found its way into the journals. The unlooked-for publication of this document having given rise to an attack on the French ministry in the Chamber of Deputies, its contents were partially denied by Count Sebastiani; but not the slightest doubt remained that Mr. Rogier had faithfully repeated the sense, if not the literal expressions, of the French foreign minister.

However, in lieu of producing the desired effect, these communications were clamorously objected to as a direct violation of the principle of non-intervention. They served but to augment the headstrong obstinacy of the Belgic chambers and patriotic associations, and to confirm them in their reckless determination to gratify their own inclinations in the choice of a sovereign; a resolution that was loudly applauded as a vigorous and necessary proof of nationality and independence. Consequently, the partisans of the two principal candidates

redoubled their efforts, and divided themselves into two bodies, each of which sought counsel from the envoys of the Conference; the Nemourists, flocking around M. Bresson, and the friends of the Duke of Leuchtenberg appealing to Lord Ponsonby. The tide of popular favour appeared at first to lean towards the latter prince. Seventy-one deputies had already pledged themselves to support him. Commissioners were privately dispatched to Munich to consult him. A party, principally composed of old servants of the empire, laboured for him in Paris; and, in order to encourage and augment the number of his adherents in Belgium, it was boldly affirmed in the public journals, that an autograph communication had been received, in which the prince declared that, "being deeply affected by the proofs of confidence and esteem evinced towards him, he should consider it his duty to accept the throne in the event of his obtaining a majority in congress." This assertion was, however, totally void of foundation. Whatever might have been the secret inclination of the young prince and his mother, under whose guardianship he still remained, he not only abstained from all direct communications, but commanded the persons charged with the negotiation, both at Brussels and Paris, to avoid compromising him by any positive assurance; a caution the more necessary, since the British government, which was erroneously supposed to be favourable to this combination, instructed Lord Erskine, its minister at the court of Bavaria, to express its unequivocal dissent; while the French envoy was ordered to remonstrate in terms still more energetic. Withheld by these and other prudential motives, the prince, so far from ever consenting to accept the crown at all hazards, addressed a letter to the Duke of Bassano, in which he declared "that his acceptance would be subordinate to the sanc-

tion of the King of the French, and that the interest of Belgium herself imperatively commanded this reserve.”

Every possible intrigue was nevertheless set on foot to procure a majority. The Count de Mejean, a French officer, long attached to the Beauharnais family, was despatched from Munich to Brussels, where he remained three days, and contributed largely to strengthen the hopes of the prince’s partisans. The name of Leuchtenberg was scrawled upon all the walls. The press, especially the *Courrier*, enthusiastically supported his cause, and, declaring the will of the French people to be paramount to that of the government, derided the idea of French intervention. His portrait was exposed in all the shops, or appended to the trees of liberty. Songs to his honour were chanted in the public thoroughfares. His bust was crowned and inaugurated at the theatre, amidst deafening plaudits. The taverns were filled with drunken roysterers, carousing at his expense; and processions, preceded by banners and music, paraded the streets, or tumultuously assembled round the hall of congress, demanding his election.

In short, unless some vigorous counter-effort was made by French diplomacy, it was evident that his success would be inevitable. This appeared the more probable, as, by a sudden and capricious revulsion of popular opinion, the conduct of the very cabinet for which congress had recently evinced such exclusive sympathy, was now looked on with suspicion by the representatives, and acrimoniously criticised by the press. These sarcasms were, however, principally levelled against Count Sebastiani, who was held up as the greatest enemy to Belgian independence, and spoken of, even in the presence of M. Bresson, in terms of undisguised aversion.\*

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\* M. Bresson, chancing to dine one day at the celebrated restaurateur Du Bos, a party of patriots loudly discussed the merits of certain

In despite of the suspicions of Orangism attached to the English mission, the current of popularity set for a time in its favour. Mr. Lebeau, and many other sane-minded patriots, appeared desirous to establish an intercourse which had hitherto been avoided by almost all save the anti-national party. British influence imperceptibly gained ground: that of France diminished in a corresponding ratio. Lord Ponsonby skilfully availed himself of this turn in the public mind to improve his acquaintance with the moderate liberals, and especially with Mr. Lebeau, in whom he quickly discovered many of the essential qualities that were calculated to entitle him to a prominent situation in the future government of his country. Indeed, with the exception of Mr. Van de Weyer, Charles le Hon, the De Brouckères, and two or three others, Mr. Lebeau was almost the only man who at that moment offered any evidence of future parliamentary or political pre-eminence.

In the meantime M. Bresson's report of the progress of the Leuchtenberg combination awakened considerable uneasiness at Paris, and at length induced the government to adopt the only course by which it could extricate itself from its embarrassment, without disturbing the repose of Europe. Not only was the utmost dexterity and promptitude required on the part of the French agents, but, in order to guard against all possibility of

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diplomats, and, above all, of Sebastiani, in terms of extreme bitterness. At the moment they were on the point of quitting the room, one of them, feeling perhaps that they had gone too far, approached M. Bresson, and offered some excuses, hoping that he did not consider there was any thing personal towards himself. "I suppose not," replied M. Bresson, with great coolness, "for I conclude if you had the intention to insult me, that you would at least have had the courage to say so." The other stammered, bowed, and retired.

indiscretion, it was even deemed necessary for the government to conceal from them the real nature of its ulterior intentions ; a proceeding that might have led to fatal results.

Instructions were, therefore, forwarded to M. Bresson to insure the election of the Duke of Nemours. Instructions that were followed by him with such eagerness and zeal, as to impress the public with the idea that he acted under a conviction of immediate acceptance. Such, indeed, was the case; for, however devoted to the interests of his country—however well calculated to conduct the most intricate diplomatic mission with skill and ability—M. Bresson was too high-minded and too independent to lend himself knowingly to any such act of duplicity as that of which he was the instrument. A subsequent illness, brought on by anxiety of mind, afforded sufficient proof of his vexation at the equivocal character he had been compelled to sustain. Although denounced at first as a willing participator in the delusion practised upon the Belgians, and even menaced with personal violence, public opinion was not long ere it distinguished the agent from the employer, and rendered due homage to the integrity and upright character of the former.\*

The coldness that had already manifested itself between M. Bresson and Lord Ponsonby, which had its source in the mysterious and vacillating policy of the French government, was augmented by the events attendant on the Duke of Nemours' election ; during which the French commissioner, not unfrequently yielding to

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\* So serious were the apprehensions for M. Bresson's personal safety, that an old French cabinet courier, who had formerly served in his family, urged him with tears in his eyes to quit the city furtively. Of course, this exasperation did not manifest itself until the reports of the refusal of Louis Philippe shewed the Belgians that they had been duped.

the impetuous ardour of a sanguine temperament, was not always enabled to restrain himself within those cool and phlegmatic bounds that are so requisite in diplomacy. In this essential qualification he was inferior to his English colleague ; who, independent of that high-bred bearing for which he was conspicuous on all ordinary occasions, appeared to gather additional dignity and self-possession in proportion to the increase of surrounding frictions

Great allowance must, however, be made for both. On the one hand, the British commissioner did not suppose that the French cabinet could think it necessary to deceive their own agent. Feeling satisfied also, that the election of the Duke of Nemours was diametrically opposed to the views of the Conference, of which he and M. Bresson were joint envoys, Lord Ponsonby was justly surprised and indignant on perceiving that his colleague had identified himself, heart and hand, with what he considered a dangerous and anti-European combination. This astonishment increased on his being informed that M. Bresson had assured those who sought counsel of him, that no doubt existed of immediate acceptance, though it was evident that such acceptance was utterly incompatible with the peace of Europe, and a direct violation of all previous pledges. Such, in fact, were the assurances of M. Bresson, until within a few hours of Louis Philippe's definitive reply. A convincing proof of his sincerity ; for the Duke of Leuchtenberg having been rejected, and the evil so much dreaded by the French cabinet victoriously set aside, it is opposed to common reason to suppose that he should persist in protracting the mystification up to the eleventh hour, had he not himself been grievously misled. Lord Ponsonby could, however, only judge from effects. The schism, therefore, waxed into an absolute breach ; and as



all farther co-operation was impracticable, the removal of one or the other became imperative. Lord Ponsonby had obeyed the instructions of the Conference, M. Bresson had violated them. Justice demanded the recal of the latter.\*

On the other hand, the malevolence and excessive zeal of the contending parties contributed to augment the misunderstanding, and to increase the jealousy and ill-will, of M. Bresson towards the English mission; and this in despite of the prudent and conciliatory efforts of Mr. Abercrombie, the British secretary of Legation, who acted as mediator. Amongst other circumstances calculated to irritate M. Bresson, it was reported that Lord Ponsonby not only supported the Duke of Leuchtenberg, but that he had spoken with confidence of his recognition by Great Britain, and that he had declared that "his instructions were to quit Brussels within twenty-four hours, should the Duke of Nemours be elected." An explanation consequently ensued, in which Lord Ponsonby unequivocally denied having used the expressions attributed to him, and declared that he was furnished with no other instructions than to discountenance the election of both candidates, "*neither of whom would or could be accepted.*"

Such was the language held by the English mission, not only to M. Bresson, but to all those who consulted it. Indeed, Great Britain being still deceived as to the

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\* This necessity became the more imperative, for the Belgic government had grounded its rejection of certain protocols (20th of January and 7th of February) on the absence of M. Bresson's signature. "It is evident," said Mr. Van de Weyer, in the congress, on the 10th of February, "that Lord Ponsonby cannot *alone* make any communication to congress. Lord Ponsonby and M. Bresson are the agents of the London plenipotentiaries; they can only act *officially* when acting *together*; and the diplomatic committee can only recognize their communications as *official* when they are signed by *both*."

force of the Orangists, continued to adhere to the cause of the hereditary prince, whose partisans were actively engaged in preparing a movement in the Flanders. It was in the sterile hope of the Prince of Orange's success, that England opposed every other combination, and even objected to that of Prince Leopold. But even supposing the national will had not raised an insuperable barrier against such a project, the French cabinet no longer made any secret of its hostility. This fact was publicly announced by Sebastiani to the Chamber of Deputies, on the 23d of February. After acknowledging that, prior to the exclusion of the Nassaus, he had not considered the choice of the Prince of Orange impossible, the French minister terminated thus:—"From that moment, the cabinet, having due regard to a decision by which the Belgians so peremptorily manifested their will, has not participated in any steps in favour of the House of Orange. Not only has it not participated, but it has interposed the influence of its counsels. This combination, which would have encountered insurmountable obstacles, is only calculated henceforth to illumine civil war."\*

No ways dismayed by surrounding difficulties, both Lord Ponsonby and M. Bresson steadily pursued their own course: the one, with a degree of zealous energy that gave the affair the air of being a question in which the honour of his country was implicated; the other, with the cool penetration of a man who felt assured that, if the grand object of his government could not be carried into effect, the failure would lead to the successful introduction of another combination, which offered all the guarantees demanded by the Conference, and which

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\* *Moniteur Français*, 24th of February, 1831. Speech of the foreign minister.

was in every way calculated to conciliate the views of the Belgic nation.

Fearing lest M. Bresson's exertions might prove insufficient, the French cabinet thought it prudent to send a coadjutor to his assistance. The person selected for this mission was the Marquis de la Woëstine, an old imperial officer, who had passed the sixteen years of the restoration in exile at Brussels; where, from his connexion with several noble families, he was supposed to possess considerable influence. Without offering any official pledges of acceptance, De la Woëstine privately expressed his conviction that the election *once effected*, France would not hear of a refusal, and thus gained over many persons who were hitherto undecided in their opinions. At the same time, the Belgic envoy at Paris, the Count de Celles, contributed largely by his private communications to the success of the intrigue. Nevertheless the strength of the parties was so nearly balanced, that M. Bresson judged it expedient to demand some more forcible demonstration on the part of his government, and to proceed himself to Paris, to explain the critical nature of the impending struggle. During his brief absence, the following letter, in reply to a despatch previously addressed by him to Sebastiani, was communicated to the provisional government and chambers, by M. de la Woëstine, who had remained as chargé d'affairs:—

“ *Paris, January 27, 1831.*

“ SIR,—I hasten to reply to your letter of the 24th. The king's council, which assembled this morning, was unanimous as to the necessity of declaring to the provisional government, that the French cabinet will consider the choice of the Duke of Leuchtenberg for the Belgic throne *as an act of hostility towards France*. In

case congress, in despite of this declaration, shall proceed to such election, you will quit Brussels forthwith."

(Signed) "SEBASTIANI."

"To M. Bresson."

This peremptory declaration, which Count Sebastiani, by an extraordinary sophism, afterwards declared to be an act of *non-recognition and not of intervention*, was too unequivocal not to produce the desired effect. Consequently, of the seventy-one who had signed the proposition in favour of the Duke of Luchtenberg, four on the first division receded from their pledge, while all those who had reserved their votes, or had intended to pronounce themselves for him, passed over to the side of his competitors. The discussion, which commenced on the 28th of January, continued until the afternoon of the 3d of February, on which day M. Bresson, who had only remained a few hours in Paris, communicated that celebrated note from Count Sebastiani, which has so often been alluded to, and which, being skilfully thrown in at the moment of the debate, served to rally more than one hesitating vote, and to impress the whole with a conviction that France had resolved to abstain from all farther intervention:—

"Paris, February 1, 1831.

"SIR,—If, as I hope, you have not communicated to the government the protocol of the 27th of January, you will oppose yourself to this communication, because the king's government has not adhered to its dispositions. As regards the question of debts, as well as that of fixing the extent and limits of the Belgic and Dutch territory, we always intended it to be understood that the free concurrence of both states was necessary.

*“The Conference of London is a mediation, and the intention of the king’s government is, that it should never lose that character.”*

(Signed) “HORACE SEBASTIANI.”

“To M. Bresson.”

The communication of this letter elicited the liveliest demonstrations of satisfaction from the assembly. It was, in fact, admirably calculated to restore French influence, and to promote an idea that France, differing from the views and principles of the Conference was prepared to co-operate with Belgium in resisting any encroachment on the part of the great powers; it was, above all, well adapted to mask that latent thirst for partition, which lurked behind all the movements of the French cabinet. Mr. Lebeau, however, availed himself of its contents to endeavour to rally the spirits of his supporters. He declared, that “France having thus acknowledged the principle of non-intervention, could not refuse to recognize the Duke of Leuchtenberg, without being guilty of a flagrant contradiction, and thus destroying all confidence in her sincerity.” But this, by no means, entered into Count Sebastiani’s contemplation. His object was not to annul the veto against the Duke of Leuchtenberg, but to inspire confidence in those who supported the Duke of Nemours. Count Sebastiani’s note, as regarded the actual crisis, must be considered as a master-piece of diplomatic craft — but when coupled with subsequent events, it stands unparalleled for its inconsistency and want of sincerity.

As the discussion drew to a close, the impatience and anxiety of the deputies, and the eagerness of the people, who crowded the galleries and adjacent streets, was raised to the utmost pitch. The fluctuation and indecision of several members was, however, so great, even

up to the last moment, that it was difficult to calculate the result, although M. Bresson, who watched the proceedings with intense anxiety, appeared confident of success. The critical moment having at length arrived, the tellers drew the names from the urn, and read them aloud amidst a breathless silence. Neither candidate having obtained an absolute majority on the first scrutiny, it was necessary to proceed to a second, when eight members, who had previously supported the Duke of Leuchtenberg, or the Archduke, having transferred their votes to the French prince, the latter obtained the victory by a majority of one voice.\*

Although many were deeply disappointed at the defeat of their favourite, the fickle populace received the announcement with uproarious acclamations; and when the thunder of the artillery, and the merry chiming of the bells proclaimed the election of a monarch, they were as eager to applaud the choice of Louis Charles Philippe, of

\* First scrutiny:—

Number of voters.....	191
Absolute majority.....	96
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Duke of Nemours.....	89
Duke of Leuchtenberg.....	67
The Archduke.....	35
Absent.....	9
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Total.....	200

Second scrutiny:—

Number of voters.....	192
Absolute majority.....	97
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Duke of Nemours.....	97
Duke of Leuchtenberg.....	74
The Archduke.....	21
Absent.....	8
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Total.....	200

Orleans, as they would have been to celebrate that of the son of Eugene. The tradespeople and artisans of Brussels, who had so grievously suffered from a stagnation of business, hailed with joy an event that promised a return to prosperity. All they wanted was tranquillity, and the presence of a court, no matter whence the prince that might ascend the throne. Triumph now sparkled in the eyes of M. Bresson and his adroit assistant, who lost no time in hastening to Paris, to communicate the successful issue of one of the most extraordinary diplomatic artifices that was ever practised on a nation; an artifice which, however objectionable as an abstract fact, had the indisputable merit of preserving European peace. As a general measure, therefore, it requires no defence.

No sooner had Congress terminated the grand operation of election, than it resolved to dispatch a deputation of ten members to Paris, to communicate the result to Louis Philippe, and solicit his acceptance; a result little doubted by the deputies, who joyously proceeded on their mission on the morning of the 5th, and arrived in the French capital on the following day, where they were received with distinguished marks of regard and courtesy, and even lodged and entertained at the royal expense.

It would be superfluous to follow the negotiations at Paris through their various stages. Suffice it to say, the deputation was not long ere it discovered that it had been buoyed up with false hopes; that neither the intrigues of the Count de Celles, nor the remonstrances of the movement party, nor, what in most instances ought to be regarded as a still more powerful stimulant, *ambition*, could induce Louis Philippe to swerve from his pacific pledges. This honourable conduct on the part of the King of the French was further confirmed by his

adhesion to the protocols of the 1st and 7th of February, (Nos. 14 and 15), the first of which had been signed by Prince Talleyrand *ad referendum*. By a remarkable and unexpected coincidence, nearly the whole of the Parisian press, which, at that period, zealously supported the July crown—for, as yet, republicanism had scarcely shewn its head—was unanimous in confirming the king's resolution.

After several private interviews, in which both monarch and ministers endeavoured to soften the disappointment of their approaching rejection by expressions of the warmest sympathy for the Belgic people, the deputation was received in solemn audience on the 17th. Seated on his throne, and surrounded by the whole of his interesting family, and by the ministers and officers of state, Louis Philippe, after listening with deep emotion to the address of Baron Surlet de Chokier, pronounced the irrevocable *fiat* of rejection in terms well calculated to move the hearts of his auditors; and to prove that he was willing to sacrifice all feelings of personal aggrandizement and of family pride to the general welfare of France and of Europe; a noble contrast to the self-interested principles that apparently influenced the chief of the Nassau dynasty!

“If,” said the French monarch, “I only listened to the dictates of my heart, and my sincere desire to obtemperate to the voice of the people, whose repose and prosperity are equally dear and important to France, I should consent with eagerness. But, however poignant my regrets, however profound the bitterness I feel at refusing to you my son, the severity of the duties I have to fulfil imposes on me this painful obligation. I am bound to declare that I cannot accept for him the crown which you are charged to offer.

“My first duty is to consult the interests of France, and, consequently, not to compromise that peace which



I hope to maintain for its welfare, for that of Belgium and of all European states, to whom it is so precious and so essential. Exempt, myself, from all ambition, my personal views accord with my duty. Neither a thirst for conquest, nor the honour of seeing a crown placed on the head of my son, will ever induce me to expose my country to a renewal of those evils that follow in the train of war, and that cannot be counterbalanced by any advantages. The example of Napoleon suffices to preserve me from the fatal temptation of erecting thrones for my children, and causes me to prefer the happiness of having maintained peace to all the splendour of those victories which, in the event of war, French valour could not fail to ensure again to our glorious standards.”\*

Having terminated his discourse by assurances of undeviating amity and protection, Louis Philippe descended from the throne, and, taking the hand of Surlet de Chokier, exclaimed, “Sir, it is to the Belgic nation that I thus give my hand. Tell your countrymen on your return that they may rely on me, and that, above all things, I implore them to continue united;”—a prudent and paternal counsel, too little heeded by the nation to whom it was addressed. The deputation now took its leave, and returned with heavy hearts to Brussels, where, the issue being already anticipated, it was proposed to entrust the reins of government to a lieutenant-general.

Thus terminated this remarkable episode, in which the partisans of the Duke of Nemours, without being conscious of the fact, largely contributed to the general welfare. Having once involved themselves in a dan-

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\* Speech of Louis Philippe to the Belgian deputies on the 17th of February, 1831.—*Moniteur Français*.

gerous dilemma, that menaced the most disastrous consequences to Europe, the election of their candidate must certainly be considered as the least of two evils. Such was not the declared opinion of English diplomacy at the moment ; for it was incumbent on it to discourage that combination by every argument in its power ; but such must have been its inward conviction. To have let fall the slightest admission of this opinion would have been the extreme of impolicy. It would have excited false hopes in Belgium, and encouraged the French cabinet in thinking more seriously of acceptance ; and thence increased its hesitation to adhere to the last protocol ; an objection that had already created great embarrassment, and threatened disastrous consequences. It was not so much the election by a trifling majority, but the acceptance of the Duke of Nemours that was to be dreaded. The surest means of counteracting such an issue was, to endeavour to diminish the majority to the smallest possible limits, and to impress the public with a conviction, that although both selections were pregnant with mischief, that of the Duke of Leuchtenberg presented less immediate danger.

The true position of the question has been admirably summed up by Mr. Nothomb. “ Every one,” says he, “ knows what has been the result of the choice of the Duke of Nemours. Impartial persons will ask, what would have been the consequence of the election of his competitor ? Whether he accepted or refused, the consequences would have been equally disastrous. By his refusal, the Duke of Leuchtenberg would have left us in *statu quo*. We might have remained in a peaceful state ; but the new French dynasty would have had a cause of complaint against us ; the act of hostility would have been flagrant, personal ; and, perhaps, the project of partition would have encountered less repugnance.

“By accepting, in defiance of France and the Conference, the Duke of Leuchtenberg would have placed himself under the ban of Europe, and would have become the crowned representative of a belligerent system. His mission would have been noble and honourable; for he would have found himself at the head of a movement that might have subverted the world. Vanquished, he would have fallen with Belgium, leaving an imperishable fame;—victorious, the Belgic throne would have been a mere stepping-stone to another crown. Under every hypothesis, our independence would have perished.”

One great lesson was derived from this episode, which was neither lost on Belgium or France. Louis Philippe, by proclaiming, in the face of the world, his impossibility, either as a king or father, to accept the crown of Belgium for his son, taught France to know, that no people are sufficiently powerful to place themselves above the general laws of Europe. If no other result had been obtained from the election of the Duke of Nemours, this was sufficient to render it of permanent value.

In the meanwhile the partisans of the Prince of Orange were not idle. An active correspondence was carried on between his royal highness, who still remained in London, and his agents in Belgium and the Rhenan provinces. Emissaries were employed on the side of Maestricht, Antwerp, and the Flanders, to tamper with the superior officers and the troops. Some of these were unable to resist the temptations thrown in their way; and, although they excused themselves from instant co-operation, they solemnly promised silence and neutrality at first, and active assistance at a later period. Attempts were likewise made to seduce various civil functionaries, by the most advantageous assurances. Pamphlets and anonymous advertisements were distributed at night.

The Orangist journals asserting the impossibility of the acceptance of the French or Bavarian princes, and the danger of anarchy, boldly upheld their candidate; whilst the Orange aristocracy redoubled their intrigues, in which they were supported by Baron de Krudener, who had arrived with a secret mission from the Russian court. In short, no efforts were spared to give force and consistency to the plot.

Independent of the counter-exertions of the all powerful patriotic association, and the immense disfavour in which the Orange name had fallen with the people, two serious impediments lay in the way of success. The one was the want of a chief or head, of such rank, influence, energy, and talent as qualified him for a task sorely fraught with danger and difficulty: the other was the deficiency of funds. The first embarrassment was never overcome, and the second not to an extent equal to the exigencies of the crisis. For the wealthy Orangists were as reluctant to open their coffers, as they were cautious of exposing their persons. Exertions were made to induce the British government to advance supplies from the secret service funds; but this was steadily resisted. Although the English ministry did not scruple to avow its predilection, and although the great mass of the British people offered up sincere vows for the success of the Orange cause, every attempt to induce the cabinet to deviate from its principle of non-intervention proved fruitless. On this, as on other occasions, the name of English diplomacy was unblushingly cited and abused. Its sentiments and expressions were misinterpreted, its passive wishes were misconstrued into assurances of active assistance. Its advice was asked, but never followed. Its warnings were disregarded. It was accused of deluding the prince's partisans, when, in fact, from the first to the last moment, it was itself most grossly

deceived, by exaggerated reports of their strength, influence, and unity. Every effort was made to induce it to compromise itself by some open demonstration; but it fortunately discerned the danger ere it irrevocably involved itself in an impracticable enterprise.

Funds were however forthcoming, and were wasted in regaling the lower orders, or in corrupting the higher. But the devotion of the one evaporated in the fumes of the liquor they had imbibed; and the courage of the other seemed buried in the coffer that engulfed the price of their co-operation. Although the majority of the Orangists distinguished themselves by an utter want of union, courage, talent, and indeed of every essential required for an undertaking so hazardous as that of promoting the cause which they advocated, one individual was found, who combined in a rare degree all that was requisite for a partisan of the first order.

This person, named Ernest Gregoire, a native of France, long domiciliated in Belgium, was a man of shattered fortunes and versatile habits, but energetic, enterprising, and of dauntless courage. He had received a good medical education, had alternately essayed surgery, law, commerce, and literature; but had failed, more from his imprudent and irregular conduct than from any dearth of talent. The revolution had overtaken him in an hour of extreme pecuniary need, and excited his hopes and ambition. Anarchy opened for him a vista of advancement and wealth. He flew from Liege to Brussels, and was one of those who, on the advance of Prince Frederick, most strenuously opposed submission. During the attack he fought with the courage of a lion, and was rewarded with the epaulettes of lieutenant-colonel. But neither his ambition nor his necessities were satisfied. He aspired to higher honours and more lucrative emoluments. His demands were

rejected, and his discontent being aroused was keenly manifested. This coming to the knowledge of the Orangist leaders, he was considered a fit instrument for their purpose. Overtures were made and accepted; his propensity to extravagance was partly gratified by immediate supplies; his ambition was stimulated by promises of future recompence, and his vanity flattered by a direct correspondence with the Prince of Orange: for the latter, in his eagerness to avail himself of every possible auxiliary to his cause, had allowed himself to be drawn into autograph relations with more than one person, with whom, under other circumstances, he would not have deigned to hold the slightest intercourse.

The following letter was found on the person of Gregoire when captured at Eccloo, a small town of Flanders, half-way between Bruges and Ghent. The original of the letter, in the hand writing of the Prince of Orange, is preserved in the archives of that town.

“ COLONEL :                      “ *London, 14th Jan. 1831.*

“ I this morning received your letter by Mr. ———. I think I cannot better reply to it than by thanking you for the sentiments you express towards me, and for the zeal which you appear disposed to display in my cause. The enclosed document contains a profession of my political creed.\* Communicate it to my partisans, and avail yourself of it to tranquillize such Belgians as may consider themselves too deeply compromised, and who may fear re-action. Perfect oblivion of the past is guaranteed by the species of manifesto which I transmit herewith. You know I never violated my promise.

(Signed)                      “ WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.”

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\* The document alluded to was a copy of the prince's manifesto of the 11th of January. See Appendix, No. 27.

The moment of the election, or rather that of the confusion attendant on the anticipated refusal of Louis Philippe, was considered favourable for a rising in the prince's favour. A separate command with which Gregoire had been entrusted in the Flanders, in order if possible to obtain possession of the territory held by the Dutch on the left bank of the Scheldt, or to protect the frontier, afforded facilities for attempting a demonstration on Ghent, the grand focus of Orangism.

Bold, indefatigable, and intelligent, Gregoire soon established relations with many influential persons in that city. At the same time he was solemnly assured of simultaneous risings in the army of the Meuse, in the garrison of Antwerp, commanded by Van der Smissen, and among the Dutch partisans at Brussels. Indeed, no doubt existed that the plot had extensive ramifications, that many persons high in civil and military authority were initiated into the secret, and, if the whole of the conspirators had conducted themselves with the daring gallantry displayed by Gregoire, that the movement would have partially succeeded, and that the country would have been plunged into the horrors of a bloody civil war.

This enterprising partisan, having made his preparations, and communicated his plans to a few officers of his corps, who were directed to gain over the privates and non-commissioned, quitted Bruges on the evening of the 1st of February, at the head of about 400 men. Advancing rapidly on Ghent, he arrived there before mid-day on the following morning, and entered the city without the slightest opposition on the part of Generals Duvivier and Wauthier, although they had been apprised of his intentions, and had a garrison of nearly 4,000 men at their disposal. Having forced the Bruges-gate,

Gregoire divided his troop into two columns. Retaining one under his own orders, he advanced at a sharp pace, and with loud shouts of "Long live Orange!" towards the mansion of Baron de Lamberts, the civil governor; whilst the other, under the command of a Captain de Bast, rushed towards the barracks of the fire-men (*pompiers*),\* halting here and there to distribute money to the populace, and urging them to make common cause in their behalf.

All was confusion and uproar in the city. The drums beat to arms, the tocsin sounded, and yet the officers commanding the troops took no steps to arrest the progress of this handful of adventurers, who had succeeded, part in penetrating into the presence of the governor, and the others in making good their passage to the gate of the fire-men's barracks. But Van de Poel, a man of considerable energy, who commanded the latter, rallied about a hundred of his men, seized the horses from some passing vehicles, harnessed them to the two field-pieces attached to his corps, loaded them with grape, made fast his gates, distributed ammunition, and adopted every necessary preparation for repelling an assault.

Finding the conspirators waver in their intentions, Van de Poel drew up his men in column, and sallied forth with his guns. After a short parley with De Bast and Gregoire, who assured him that resistance was vain, that Duvivier, De Lamberts, the troops and regency had declared against the government, and that 6,000 men

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\* The *pompiers*, or fire-men, of which there is a corps in every Belgic city of note, are armed, organized, and paid by the municipalities. Independent of their services as fire-men, they are employed, in cases of emergency, to perform police duties, and aid the civil power.



were marching on Ghent to proclaim the Prince of Orange, he peremptorily rejected all overtures, and gave the word to fire. A sharp but brief conflict ensued. In despite of the efforts of the leaders, Gregoire's people soon became disheartened. Finding themselves vigorously attacked by the fire-men in front, seconded by a destructive fire of grape and musketry on their flank, in danger of being assailed by the garrison in the rear, and seeing the people perfectly passive, the majority gave up the contest, and took to flight, leaving about eighty of their number killed or wounded in the hands of the victors. Among the latter was De Bast, who had fought with signal bravery. Gregoire finding all further resistance useless, and being abandoned by his men, set spurs to his horse, and fled back to Eccloo, with the intention of escaping to France; but being recognized by the populace, he was seized, manacled, and reconducted to Ghent, amidst the revilings and execrations of the multitude. He and several others were subsequently tried and acquitted; not from lack of sufficient proof of culpability—for, being taken with arms in their hands, the law of nations justified their immediate execution—but from the utter disinclination of the authorities to imbrue their hands in blood.

The failure of this movement must be attributed entirely to the energetic resistance of Van de Poel and his fire-men, and to the firmness of De Lamberts; both ardent patriots and exalted Catholics. For not a man of the garrison moved until the struggle had terminated; and although money was lavishly distributed, the populace of all classes remained neuter. The government no sooner received intelligence of the affair, than it despatched Mr. Van de Weyer and J. Van der Linden to establish an investigation. It was soon discovered that the number of persons indirectly implicated, or other-

wise compromised, was so great, that it would be more politic to draw a veil over the transaction, and to affect ignorance of certain facts; which, had they been made public, must have created considerable embarrassment to the government, and exposed to Europe the confusion and fatal want of unity that pervaded all branches of the military and civil service.

The regency of Ghent was, however, suspended, and a commission of public safety nominated in its place; the officers commanding were recommended to be more vigilant; the troops were applauded for their patriotism in having remained faithful to the national cause; Van de Poel and his officers were promoted and rewarded with permanent army rank; and Gregoire, De Bast, and their comrades in misfortune, who had been detained in prison, were liberated and permitted to quit the country. Thus terminated the only overt demonstration that the partisans of the Prince of Orange had the courage to attempt, during the whole revolution.\* For, although the subsequent conspiracy of the month of March was more extensive, and although the names of Van der Smissen, and others of equal rank were implicated, yet being attended by an utter want of unity, self-devotion, combination, or discretion, it miscarried ere it came to maturity, and terminated by the arrest or flight of the ringleaders, and without the necessity of shedding a drop of blood.†

While these events were passing at Brussels and

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\* Gregoire proceeded to Holland, where he was permitted to take rank in the Dutch army, and was employed in the formation of a corps of partisans.

† So indiscreet were the Orangists, that the wife of one of the principal conspirators was seen and heard, in the public walks, detailing the plans of the party, and announcing the certain arrival of the Prince of Orange upon a given day.

Ghent, an incident occurred at Antwerp that was well calculated to excite the ardour and patriotism of the Dutch, and to add one more to the many traits of dauntless devotion so often displayed by their gallant navy. The small squadron of gun-boats, which had been compelled to seek shelter from the ice in Flushing harbour, having resumed its station abreast of the city, one of these, commanded by Lieutenant Van Speyk, parted from her moorings in a violent squall, on the morning of the 5th of February, and took the ground close to the battery of St. Laurent, to the north of the commercial basins. The fruitless exertions of the crew to avoid getting ashore having been witnessed by the people on the quays, and the fate of the vessel anticipated, an immense crowd collected round the spot. Amongst these was a company of Belgic volunteers, who the instant the vessel touched the strand, darted forward, partly with the view of taking possession, and partly with that of protecting the crew from insult.

The officer commanding the volunteers having addressed a few words to the Dutch lieutenant, which were mistaken for an order to haul down his flag, the latter instantly formed the desperate resolution of sacrificing himself, his people and vessel, rather than submit to the disgrace of surrender: an extravagant and uncalled-for resolution. Without communicating his intention to any but one sailor, who had followed him below, he sprung into the cabin, under pretext of securing his papers, opened the powder magazine, placed a lighted segar on one of the sacks of powder, threw himself on his knees in an attitude of prayer, and thus awaited his fearful destiny. His terrified companion had scarcely time to rush upon deck, and cast himself headlong into the river, ere a tremendous explosion shook the whole city, and in an instant not a vestige

remained of the vessel, save a few scattered spars and fragments of wreck, that were hurled far on shore, or were seen floating down the stream. Of a crew of thirty-one hands, three only escaped; the mangled bodies of the rest were carried seaward, or stranded on the muddy banks below the city.

Justly proud of the heroic, though useless devotion of their young countryman, the Dutch raised a public monument to his memory, and, in order to perpetuate the remembrance of the deed among the navy, the king directed that a vessel of war should henceforth bear the martyr's name.

Notwithstanding the gravity of the questions that had occupied the attention of the Belgic congress during the last month, it had not neglected another subject of vital importance to the nation. After several weeks' arduous labour and discussion, it terminated its revision of the constitution, and proclaimed its final and unanimous adoption on the 7th of February. This charter, divided into eight chapters, consisting of 139 articles, is drawn up on the broadest principles of civil and religious liberty. It guarantees the freedom of the press and of worship, the trial by jury, *the abolition of civil death*,\* domiciliary security, and the right of political association, without arms. It determines the nature of national representation, and defines the attributes of the crown, which, as regards the right of succession, is founded on the Salique law. It declares the inviolability of the king, the responsibility of ministers, the independence of judges, and contains a variety of provisions so eminently liberal, as to satisfy the most exaggerated pretensions.

At first sight, this code presents an aspect of extra-

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\* La mort civile.

ordinary equity, well harmonizing with the wants of the people, and the progress of reason and education in the present day. It guarantees, even to an extreme length, every species of liberty, and fully consecrates every public or private right ; but on a closer inspection, it will be found to be better adapted to a republican than to a monarchical form of government ; and to have been drawn up with such marked distrust and jealousy of kingly prerogative, as to render an extension of the royal powers, and a modification of various other articles, almost inevitable. Experience, the great regulator of all human conceptions, has already pointed out some of its evils. Time, and national consolidation, can alone effect the desired amendments.

## CHAPTER VII.

PROPOSITION FOR THE NOMINATION OF A LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OF THE KINGDOM REJECTED—BARON SURLET ELECTED REGENT—HIS INAUGURATION—APPOINTS A NEW MINISTRY—THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT RESIGN—GENERAL BELLARD REPLACES M. BRESSON—ADVICE OF LORD PONSONBY TO THE BELGIANS—FORMATION OF PATRIOTIC ASSOCIATIONS—STATE OF THE ARMY—EMBARRASMENTS OF COMMERCE AND FINANCE—GENERAL POLITICAL ASPECT OF EUROPE—PROPOSITION FOR A PARTITION OF BELGIUM—ITS GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE GERMANIC CONFEDERATION—STATE OF THE BELGIC QUESTION AS REGARDED LUXEMBOURG—PROCLAMATIONS OF THE KING OF HOLLAND AND THE REGENT—FURTHER PLOTS OF THE ORANGISTS—VAN DER SMISSEN FLIES THE COUNTRY—BORREMAN'S ARRESTED—LETTER FROM BARON SURLET DE CHOKIER RESPECTING CERTAIN CHARGES AGAINST LORD PONSONBY—GENERAL STATE OF ANARCHY.

THE adhesion of France to the 14th and 15th protocols, and the refusal of Louis Philippe to accept the crown of Belgium for his son, whilst it gave a fresh stimulus to the intrigues of the Orangists, diffused general discouragement among the patriots, and excited the utmost fear lest the country should relapse into that state of confusion bordering upon anarchy, whence it had hoped to emerge by the election of a sovereign. In proportion as the provisional government had been haughty, and confident of the Duke of Nemours' acceptance, so were they embarrassed and dejected, when they discovered that their contemptuous rejection of the protocol of the 7th of February produced no other result than to fortify the great powers in their determination to adhere to its contents.\*

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\* The protocol of the 7th of February (No. 15), was presented by Lord Ponsonby to the diplomatic committee on the 10th of February,

Placing perfect reliance on the assurances of Lord Ponsonby, that the acceptance of the French prince was impossible, Mr. Lebeau had early anticipated a rejection, and endeavoured to apply a remedy, by proposing the nomination of a "lieutenant-general, who should exercise the powers of a chief of the state, until the sovereign elected by congress should have accepted the crown, and sworn to maintain the constitution." This proposition, which no way militated against the acceptance of the Duke of Nemours, was the more worthy of deliberation, from the state of deconsideration into which the provisional government had fallen. Indeed, the majority of this body were themselves fatigued with the weight of power, and eager to escape from its responsibility. Baron d'Hoogvorst had already resigned, and others were desirous to imitate his example. Affairs wore a sinister aspect both at home and abroad. The Netherlands government, which had proceeded in the organization of its army with admirable vigour and success, had assumed a menacing attitude. The prospect of an amicable arrangement was declared by its ministers to be farther removed than ever. A collision between the two countries seemed inevitable, and the more so, since the armistice of December was daily infringed by both parties, in the vicinity of Maestricht and in the Flanders.

Yet, while the Dutch, acting as it were from one sole impulse, presented a picture of unrivalled patriotism, concord, loyalty and devotion to the throne and govern-

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and returned instanter, on the plea that, "in a matter of such delicacy and importance, the committee could not receive from the Conference an act contrary to the decisions of congress; and that, having elected the Duke of Nemours, and despatched a deputation to Paris, it was to this deputation only that an official answer could be made."

ment, Belgium was distracted by clashing factions and rival systems. It was a prey to all the perils of uncertainty and intrigue. It was without government, army, or confidence. Treason was rife throughout its ranks. Its commerce, painfully struggling against the consequences of the revolution, was divided into two camps. Ghent and Antwerp sighed for a return to the old government, or the Prince of Orange; whilst many persons at Verviers, Namur, Luxembourg, Charleroi, Mons, and Liege demanded an integral union with France. It must be observed, however, that the paramount object of all parties was not to nominate this or that sovereign, but to escape from a crisis that threatened to annihilate the last remnants of their fortunes. Such a position was insupportably critical, and rendered the centralization of the executive power absolutely indispensable.

Mr. Lebeau's project was, therefore, referred to the legislative sections, where, after mature deliberation, it gave way to the more popular proposition for the establishment of a regency; a decision mainly founded on the jealousy of the representatives, lest the slightest alteration should be attempted in their infant constitution; for it was objected, that "a Lieutenant-General exercising sovereign power might effect changes in the constitution with the consent of the chambers, according to the 131st section of the same; whereas no such change could result under a regency."

In the meanwhile De Potter, who deemed the occasion favourable for introducing his democratic theories once more to public notice, addressed a petition to congress urging the establishment of a republic. "We are now suffering the penalty of our original errors," said the petitioner, "after having tried every thing to escape from utter ruin. Some of you, calculating that the surest way to terminate the ills that oppressed us was by



seeking the support of France, and a direct union with that country, voted for the Duke of Nemours. But the French government will have nothing to do with Belgium, directly or indirectly; its paramount object is peace. Like all other European governments, it only sighs for peace. *Peace at any price!* The refusal of the prince of our choice has been the consequence, and has produced a crisis that must decide the destiny of our country. You must choose between dismemberment, the Prince of Orange, and a republic. Your choice will not be doubtful!"

It was not doubtful. But Mr. de Potter seems to have been as ignorant of the political condition of Europe as he was of the sentiments of his countrymen. For Mr. Robaulx having founded upon this petition a proposition for the immediate foundation of a republic, the motion was rejected almost without a division; while several members declared that the question of a republic having been already irrevocably set aside, any proposal to that effect was as unconstitutional and insulting to the house as a recurrence to the Prince of Orange, for mentioning whose name the venerable Maclagan, of Ostend, had been called to order. This matter was further set at rest on the 23d of February, in their adopting, by an immense majority, a proposition, "declaring the throne to be vacant, and decreeing the nomination of a regent, with a monthly civil list of 10,000 florins, and a national palace as his place of abode; congress reserving to itself the exclusive exercise of the constituent and legislative power."

The day for the nomination of a regent being fixed for the twenty-fourth, the choice of the representatives fell upon Baron Surlet de Chokier. His competitor was the Count Felix de Merode, who, little ambitious of the honour that it was desired to confer upon him, had

made no effort to insure his election, or it is highly probable that the majority would have pronounced itself in his favour. Indeed, both candidates appear to have acted with the utmost disinterestedness and concord. A mutual friend of great influence having addressed a note to them, requesting their instructions as to the steps to be taken, should a second scrutiny be necessary, received the following joint reply: "Do that which you think best for the good of the country; we are perfectly of one accord."

The election of Surlet was received with loud acclamations by the public, who hailed this measure as a step towards consolidation. The nomination of a regency was in truth but a partial transition from that provisional state whence all parties were eager to escape; but it was nevertheless a symptom of progression, and the only alternative that could be prudently adopted. The refusal of the Duke of Nemours, and the excluding *vetos* of the Conference, had circumscribed the number of persons eligible for the sovereignty, and rendering the Belgians more cautious, menaced them with a prolongation of that uncertainty whose baneful effects could only be modified by some intermediary measure. To proceed to a new election, without previous assurance of acceptance, would have been a dangerous perseverance in the error into which they had already fallen. To continue the *statu quo* was impossible; and as some change was unavoidable, the Congress acted wisely in establishing the monarchical principle, by "*declaring the throne to be vacant.*" Thus, while it allayed the fears of those cabinets that still dreaded the ascendancy of republican principles, it gave time for all parties to look around them, and to concert as to the person best adapted to meet the general views.

The installation of the regent took place on the 25th.

The ceremony gave an unwonted air of movement and festivity to the city, and yet the whole country tottered on the brink of a volcano. Plots and conspiracies were fomenting in every direction, and the demon of civil war stood urging on the citizens to mutual destruction. The vigilance of one party, and the pusillanimity of the other, averted the calamity.

The regent elect having quitted his humble lodging,\* entered a no less modest hired carriage, and proceeded, with an escort of cavalry, to the palace of the nation; where he was received at the foot of the grand staircase by a deputation of ten members, who conducted him into the body of the house. Having made his obeisance with the air of a man little covetous of such honours, he ascended a throne of crimson velvet, over which was emblazoned the Belgic lion, *rampant passant*, holding in its paw a lance surmounted with the cap of Liberty, supported on either side by the national banner, and bearing the motto, "*L'Union fait la force*;"—a bitter satire on the utter disunion that so long cramped all the energies of government, and menaced the safety of the infant kingdom!

Here, surrounded by a numerous staff, whose varied uniforms added much to the brilliancy of the scene, Baron Surlet first gave his solemn assent to the decree, enacting that, "It was as a constituent body, that congress had proclaimed the independence of Belgium, and decreed the perpetual exclusion of the Orange Nassau family." He then took the oath "to observe the constitution and laws of the Belgic people, and to maintain the national independence and territorial integrity." Having delivered a speech containing a de-

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\* Baron Surlet occupied the second story of a pastry-cook's shop, in the street called Cantersteen.

claration of his principles and intentions, which was replied to by Mr. Gerlache, the new president, the regent withdrew, and was re-conducted to the peristyle of the palace, amidst the thunder of cannon and the acclamations of the populace. Rejoiced, however, to escape from his young glories, he dismissed his equipage and escort, and borrowing an umbrella from a casual bystander, proceeded on foot across the park to the mansion allotted him by the nation. A sumptuous banquet and general illumination, the first approach to conviviality or rejoicing that had been seen in Brussels since the revolution, terminated the ceremonies of the day.

The establishment of a regency was immediately followed by the resignation of the provisional government, and the dissolution of the ministry.\* The majority of the latter was, however, re-appointed by the regent, whose first public act was the constitution of a regular cabinet.†

Baron Erasmus Surlet de Chokier, the individual who had been thus elevated to the highest honours that his countrymen could confer upon him, was then in his sixty-third year. Descended from an ancient and independent family in the province of Limbourg, he had passed the greater portion of his life in comparative retirement at his patrimonial estate of Gingelhom, near St. Trond, where he had devoted himself to agricultu-

\* A sum of 150,000 florins was granted by congress to be divided among the members of the provisional government, "as an indemnity" for labour and loss of time.

† First Belgic Ministry :—

Messrs. Van de Weyer .....	Foreign.
Tielemans .....	Interior.
Gendebien .....	Justice.
C. de Brouckère .....	Finance.
Goblet .....	War.

ral pursuits. On the breaking forth of the first French revolution, Surlet had eagerly embraced the levelling theories of republicanism, and casting aside his hereditary parchments, had assumed the indiscriminate appellation then in vogue. Having received a superior education, being gifted with good natural abilities, some eloquence, and no ordinary shrewdness and humour, masked by a veil of extreme simplicity, he had early ingratiated himself into the confidence of his provincial neighbours, and had been selected to fill various stations of minor importance in the local magistracy. Being an enthusiastic partisan and admirer of France, he warmly associated himself in every measure tending to increase her moral influence amongst his countrymen ; and having been elected a member of the French *corps legislatif*, as one of the representatives for the department of the Lower Meuse, he was rewarded by Napoleon with the titular distinction of a counsellor of state.

It was not, however, until the erection of the Netherlands kingdom, that Surlet first brought himself into public notice, as a member of the second chamber of the States-General ; where he distinguished himself by his liberal politics, and by an almost undeviating opposition to the government ; a hostility no way diminished by the constant intrigues of the ministry to exclude him from the national representation. Frugal and temperate in his habits, frank and affable in his manner, benevolent in his disposition, and enjoying a character of spotless integrity, he had always been esteemed by his equals ; while his lofty stature, the long grey locks that floated negligently over his shoulders, his venerable countenance, enlivened by a humour-sparkling eye, added to the impression he produced on the rural population, by whom he was regarded in the light of a patriarch. On the first convocation of the Belgic Congress he was re-elected

deputy, and chosen president of the chamber, where he rendered himself highly popular by the tact and temper he displayed in maintaining order. It was to this popularity that he owed the honour of the regency.

Although his position as president had precluded him in some measure from taking part in the debates, his political tendencies were not disguised. The sympathies of his youth, fostered during maturer years, were adhered to in more advanced age. His bias was essentially French. Being aware that a direct re-union with that country was impracticable, he ardently desired the substitution of some intermediary process that would have been tantamount in its effects. He was consequently a devoted advocate for the election and acceptance of the Duke of Nemours ; and although his own elevation was the result of that prince's refusal, he would rather have sacrificed all temporary honours than have been compelled to renounce his favourite theory. Being unmarried, having a private fortune beyond his wants, and being averse to ostentation, he appeared devoid of all ambition, or so well concealed his sentiments beneath a cloak of such extreme disinterestedness, as to baffle the penetration of all ordinary observers. His acceptance of supreme power, if the circumscribed authority with which he was invested by congress could be so called, past current for an act of devotion to his country, rather than of self-interest ; and although more than one circumstance indicated that he was not insensible to the charms of regal office, the public was fully convinced that he was more eager to relinquish than he had been to assume the dignities conferred upon him.\*

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\* In conferring the executive on the Regent, the congress reserved to itself *exclusively* the legislative and constituent powers ; thus rendering the regent the mere agent of their will, and incapacitating him from concurring with or opposing their acts.

The little progress made towards domestic or foreign consolidation during the regency, plainly showed that Baron Surlet, however estimable as a private individual, or however well qualified to fill the president's chair, was no ways calculated to grapple with the numerous embarrassments with which he was environed. He not only lacked the moral courage and firmness necessary for curbing the passions of the people at home, but had neither sufficient influence or political experience to inspire respect abroad. With him a union or *quasi* union with France was the cherished project, to which all other combinations were subservient. Thus, while he submitted himself entirely to the influence of the French cabinet or their agents, and laboured incessantly to give an exclusively French tendency to the acts of his government, he utterly deceived the great mass of the Belgic people, who imagined that he and his ministers were zealous champions of national independence.

Fortunately for the repose of Europe, General Belliard, who succeeded M. Bresson on the 5th March, as joint commissioner from the Conference, was more devoted to the common cause than to the hazardous aggrandizement of his native country. Had it been otherwise, had a diplomatist of the movement party, or a man less prudent and conciliating than this brave and respected veteran been employed, the results might have been most disastrous.\* Belliard's influence, zealously supported

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\* Auguste, Count Belliard, lieutenant-general, and peer of France, a native of Picardy, and a soldier of fortune, who had raised himself to the highest honours by the sole force of his own merit. Napoleon, well knowing his talents, had entrusted him with various appointments of the utmost importance. Thus he had gained the good will of the Belgians when commanding the military division in which Brussels was included under the Empire. He was subsequently governor of Madrid, and was called from thence to act as chief of the staff to the cavalry of the grand army commanded by Murat.

by his British colleague, between whom and the French agent there existed the utmost cordiality, was a fortunate counterpoise to tendencies which were in direct opposition to the views of the great powers, and which, if long persisted in, must have led to a general conflagration.

It was this adherence to a system of diplomacy exclusively French, and consequently essentially anti-European, that soon induced Mr. Van de Weyer to resign the foreign department. This resignation produced the dissolution of the ministry, which was in fact composed of such heterogeneous elements as to render its existence impracticable. For while Mr. Van de Weyer, who was among the first to perceive the error they had fallen into, argued that in order to secure national independence, it was necessary to adopt a more divergent and enlarged basis, and to cultivate and promote a good understanding, not only with, but between Great Britain and France—Gendebien and Tielemans were averse to every inspiration that did not emanate from the French movement party, or that did not tend to embroil the two predominating cabinets. On the other hand, while Mr. C. de Brouckère, vacillating between two systems, now turned his eyes to France, and now advocated national independence, Goblet, abhorring anarchy, was said to regret the past, to tremble for the future, and inwardly to regard the Prince of Orange as the only medium for restoring prosperity to the country, or of reconciling it with the rest of Europe.

It was on the 28th of March that the new ministry\*

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\* Second Ministry :—

Messrs. Lebeau .....	Foreign Affairs.
Duvivier.....	Finance.
Sauvage .....	Interior.
Barthelemy .....	Justice.
Count d'Hane.....	War.



was installed ; a change that operated favourably for the maintenance of peace. Mr. Lebeau, who had assumed the difficult and ungrateful task of conducting the foreign department, entered office with the intention of diverting the politics of the cabinet into a new channel, and of divesting it of some portion of that exclusiveness which so strongly militated against all prospect of amicable adjustment. Lord Ponsonby promptly took advantage of this alteration to encourage the new ministry in a system which, for the first time, promised to harmonize, not only with the interests of Europe, but with those of Belgium. The language held by the British envoy is a proof of his enlightened and profound view of the question. It was the echo of that of his government.

“ The error into which your diplomacy has hitherto fallen,” said the English negotiator, “ has been its partial leaning towards France, and its almost puerile distrust of other cabinets. This might have been excusable at first, as it resulted from the peculiar nature of your position. For, admitting that the germs of your revolution had been long implanted, it was that of France that brought them to maturity. The offspring was, therefore, compelled to cling for succour to the parent. The affinity of your relative positions in regard to other states, the disfavour that fell upon you in particular, may have rendered it necessary for you to cleave to each other, in order to support the principles that led to the subversion of two dynasties. But, rely on it, if you now value your nationality, and if you have any sincere desire to be admitted into the general bond that connects the great European families, you must act upon principles more large, more general, and less calculated to inspire jealousies amongst those who, in despite of your repugnance to interference, must be

the arbiters of your destiny. France may have brought your revolution into being, but, single-handed, she cannot insure your political existence. The co-operation of Great Britain and her allies is essential. However powerful France may be, she has not the strength, nor indeed the inclination, to bear you upon her shoulders against the will of united Europe. You have the proof of this in the refusal of the Duke of Nemours ; and be assured, notwithstanding all present protestations, that she will not only adhere to past protocols, but to all future equitable measures that may be proposed by the Conference.

“ The only line for you to pursue is that of conciliation and moderation. You must be firm, but not intemperate. Before you threaten to throw down the gauntlet of defiance, ponder well on the mischances that may arise if you force Europe to cast away the scabbard. Before you talk of distrusting other powers, study to efface their want of confidence in you. (If the election of the Prince of Orange be impracticable, select some other prince who offers the desired guarantees.) Satisfy Europe that you hold yourselves amenable to the same social laws that bind other states ; that you are contented to assume a station co-ordinate with your weight in the general balance ; that you seek to secure your own rights, without infringing those of neighbouring nations ; that you neither aim at a re-union, direct nor indirect ; that you neither lean to the north nor to the south ; and that on whichever side public tranquillity shall be menaced, there you will be ready to interpose your good offices. Prove, by your discretion, that your permanent object is to secure your own independence on sound monarchical principles, and not to propagate the subversion of existing institutions. Above all, bear in mind that the grand object of the five powers is the maintenance of

peace; and that, unless you bring your quota of sacrifices in aid of this important object, there can be no accord between you and the rest of Europe. The consolidation of your national existence, no matter under what prince or form of government, depends on the preservation of a perfect understanding between the great powers; and, above all, upon an intimate union between France and England. Commit any act that may tend to destroy the former, or enfeeble the latter, and you will be guilty of national suicide."

The concordance between these prudent counsels, and the opinions entertained by one of the ablest publicists in Belgium—opinions fully justified by results—is too remarkable to be omitted, and the more so, since they must be invariably and essentially applicable to that country; for her situation, in regard to other states, never can undergo any serious modification. "Society," says the writer, "either considered in its aggregate or individual character, must be co-ordinate.\* Belgium, instead of living for and by France alone, must assimilate her policy to the principles that regulate all other European societies. She must neither be French, German, nor English. She must amalgamate herself with and form a part of the grand total, and yet retain her peculiar destination and individuality. She is neither sufficiently powerful, nor, it is to be hoped, sufficiently improvident, to assume the character of a propaganda. If she wish for independence, she must embrace a broad, impartial, and

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\* These passages are extracted from an article in the *Courrier des Pays Bas* of the 30th April, 1831, attributed to Mr. Nothomb, who, having already distinguished himself by the force and logic with which he had treated the several great political questions in Congress, was appointed under secretary for foreign affairs (*secrétaire général*) upon the accession of the Lebeau ministry; an office he has continued to fill, to the latest hour, with no common talent and ability.

European system of diplomacy. Situated between France and Germany, she must act as a barrier against one or the other as circumstances may require, but she must be a gaoler to neither. She has a station in Europe; let her maintain it! Instead of placing herself under the patronage of any one nation in particular, let her profit by the eternal rivalries of all, to strengthen her own existence. Her position is admirable. She is destined by her situation to be the entrepôt of the world. She has a fruitful soil, two fine rivers, and the noblest port in Europe. The policy of her neighbours, especially that of Holland, has tended, for the last two centuries, to deprive her of all the natural advantages of her position. The principal cause of the evils she has endured is, that she has never possessed an exclusive reigning dynasty since the demise of the last Duke of Burgundy. She was to Charles V. what she has been to William I., a mere territorial accessory. If, therefore, her love of independence be not a vain boast, let her establish a national government and dynasty that will accord with European policy, and that will thus legitimate and give immediate maturity to her revolution; a dynasty which, instead of consenting to any territorial concessions, as heretofore has been the case with our former sovereigns, will maintain the national unity, and thus identify itself with the people. This question of dynasty is not secondary; it includes our whole political system, and embraces all our future prospects. But if Belgium desire a re-union with France; if she wish to become to France what she was to Holland—that is, a mere augmentation of territory—let her continue in her present course; let her prolong the present state of uncertainty, or come to a conclusion without consistency or prospect of durability. Let her acknowledge that her revolution was premature, and keep herself disposable until France shall

either be prepared or have the courage to come and take possession. *There can be no alternative between absolute independence and a re-union with France.*"

These observations were fully corroborated by the state of the country at this period. Its military, financial, and commercial condition was indeed deplorable. For although the establishment of a regency was the only measure by which anarchy could be averted, still it was little more than a prolongation of that precarious uncertainty which had menaced the peace of Europe during six months. The regent's government had neither strength nor consideration. Unable to combat the many factions that filled the capital and provinces with constant agitation, it saw its internal authority betrayed or counteracted by its own agents; while its external policy was exposed to premature discussion by congress, or bitterly stigmatized by the "patriotic association," which had raised itself to a level with the executive, and obtained supreme influence over the lower classes.

This association, first formed on the 23d of March, was composed of public functionaries and officers of all ranks; in short, of almost every individual who was desirous to prove the intensity of his patriotism, or who dreaded his political opinions being called into question. Its avowed object, as set forth by the fourth article of its statutes, was, "to defend and maintain Belgic nationality and independence, at the price of the utmost sacrifices; to combat the Nassaus; never to enter into any compromise with that family, no matter to what straits the country might be reduced; and finally, to repulse all foreign aggression."

If this association was mainly instrumental in defeating the efforts of the Prince of Orange's supporters, it was little instrumental to the national defence. For,

although the doctrines it disseminated might have inflated the overweening confidence of some of the people, they served but to increase the spirit of misrule that pervaded every branch of the public service—especially the army, which had hitherto baffled all attempts at organization or subordination. The civic guard, it is true, presented an imposing numerical force; but the major part were unarmed, and the whole were without a shadow of discipline. Forty-five thousand regulars existed on paper, but these scarcely furnished an effective of half that number, inefficiently commanded. Indeed, at a later period the minister of war was compelled to account for his having dismissed certain officers from the service, by denouncing them as branded convicts.\* And yet, in order to blockade Antwerp and Maestricht, and to defend the long line of open frontier extending from Venloo on the Meuse, to Ecluse on the shores of the North Sea, it required at least 80,000 good troops, and above all, a corps of talented and devoted officers. In this, the Dutch could boast of an immense superiority, resulting from the system of partiality pursued by the government during the union. So completely was Belgium unprepared for defence, so divided the state of parties, so open the whole country, from Breda and Eindhoven to Brussels, that an enterprising commander, at the head of 20,000 staunch soldiers, might have sprung across the frontier, and dashing upon the capital, reduced it to instant submission.

Not only was industry and commerce completely paralyzed, but the penury of the finance department was extreme. Some provinces were in arrear with their

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\* Speech of Mr. Charles de Brouckère to the chambers, September, 1831. It is essential, however, to observe, that these persons belonged to the free corps, and not to the line regiments.

contributions; the forced loan of ten millions, raised in the preceding autumn, was exhausted, and the government was compelled to borrow 600,000 florins of the bank, in order to meet the current expenses of March. Nor was it until congress sanctioned a further loan of 12,000,000, that the war minister was enabled to avail himself of the new levies of militia, which had hitherto remained inactive from want of funds. But in proportion as the horizon lowered around them, so their language was stamped with energy in all matters connected with external policy.

The inflammatory condition of Europe at this period was, however, most essentially favourable to Belgic pretensions. Standing, as it were, on the brink of a volcano, the great powers were little disposed to aggravate domestic perplexities by foreign collision. The position of the different cabinets may be traced in a few words. That of England, uncertain of the issue of the reform question, was as anxious to secure herself from continental embarrassments, by drawing still closer the growing bond of amity with France, as it was to strengthen its character for liberality at home and abroad, by adhering as much as possible to the principle of non-intervention; although, in fact, this principle was perpetually violated, from the emission of the protocol, enforcing the strict execution of the armistice, down to the convention, sanctioning the military operations against the citadel. France, intent on giving stability to her new dynasty, and on upholding the principles by which Louis Philippe was elevated to the throne, vacillated between the policy of maintaining amicable relations with foreign states, and that of conciliating the movement party at home. To effect this, without internal troubles or external concussion, required no ordinary address. The course the French ministry pursued was doubtless tinged with

artifice and insincerity as regarded Belgium. But Louis Philippe and Casimir Perier rose superior to the difficulties by which they were environed. By strictly adhering to the system laid down by them, France is mainly indebted for the preservation of a peace more honourable and more advantageous than the most glorious victories.

Prussia, distrustful of her Rhenish provinces, and eager to guarantee the duchy of Posen from the contagious effects of the Polish revolution, more dangerous than the fatal epidemic that was then advancing with rapid strides towards the Rhine, had little heart to plunge into a war of restoration, by which she could not obtain a foot of ground, but might have risked the loss of her territory.

The attention of Austria was engaged in suppressing insurrection in her Lombardo-Venetian possessions ; whilst Hanover, Electoral Hesse, and other minor states of the Confederation, were a prey to internal disorders, which rendered the removal of their contingents a matter of difficulty and hazard.\*

Finally, Russia who never for a moment contemplated the recognition of Belgic independence, and had prepared her forces for a western crusade, was paralyzed by the Polish revolution ; the whole resources of her gigantic empire scarcely sufficing to replenish the gaps caused in her ranks by sickness and the sword. And herein lay the great secret of European peace and Belgic emancipation. Fatal as the Polish revolution

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\* The total force of the Confederation consists of 301,637 men, divided into ten army corps, giving an effective of 222,637 infantry ; 11,694 light troops, 43,090 cavalry, 21,717 artillery and train, and 3,017 engineers.

The federate fortresses are Mayence, Landau, and Luxembourg. The Confederation consists of thirty-eight states.



might have been in its conduct and issue, it was the main barrier to the liberticide views of the autocrat. Had not the Poles risen, fought and struggled, war was inevitable. That valiant Polish army, the just pride of the severe Czarowitch, in lieu of spilling its blood in defence of its native hearths and altars, would then have formed the vanguard of their oppressor's hosts. The martyrs, whose bones lay bleaching upon the plains of Grochow, Dembé, and Ostrolenka, instead of sacrificing themselves as holocausts to the liberties of their country, would have been converted into instruments of Moscovite despotism. Then would have ensued that fierce struggle of opinions, so justly dreaded by all good men ; a struggle whose progress would have been marked by bloodshed and desolation, and whose results would have plunged Europe into abject slavery or immoderate licentiousness.

The issue of this complicated state of affairs tallied in some measure with the vaunting of the Belgic ultra-liberals, while it far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the more moderate patriots. The restitution of the 11th and 12th protocols produced the revision and modification of some of the most obnoxious clauses. The daring tone assumed by congress impressed the Conference—not with an idea of Belgic power being any way commensurate with its bombast, but of its reckless determination to plunge Europe into war, rather than purchase its independence at the expense of what was considered a loss of national honour, or of any one of those elements which were held necessary to its political existence. “We have commenced our revolution in defiance of treaties,” said they, “and we will terminate it in despite of the protocols.”\*

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\* Proclamation of the Regent of Belgium to the province of Luxembourg, 10th March, 1831. See Appendix, No. 30.

Under any other circumstances, this haughty and intemperate bearing would have exhausted the patience of the arbitrating powers, and perhaps have led to a partition, in despite of the repugnance of Great Britain ; a partition by which more than two-thirds of the Flanders, with the province of Antwerp, and the northern half of Limbourg and Brabant, including Brussels, would have fallen to Holland ; by which the eastern portion of Luxembourg, with Liege, and other territories on the left banks of the Meuse and Moselle, would have been obtained by Prussia ; by which Namur, Hainault, and a part of West Flanders would have been ceded to France, who would thereby have regained much that she had abandoned since the time of Louis XIV., and thus included within her frontiers those imposing barrier-fortresses whose construction had formed an object of urgent solicitude to Great Britain during the preceding fifteen years.

Although the intentions of the great powers in regard to this question are enveloped in mystery, it is incontestible that a proposition for partition was privately made by the French to the Prussian plenipotentiary, as the readiest and simplest mode of cutting asunder the Gordian knot of negotiation. But it is no less certain that the subject was never laid before the British cabinet in an *official* shape. The suggestion was privately hinted, but unhesitatingly rejected. The idea of occupying Antwerp, and “ converting it into a second Gibraltar,” as affirmed in the Belgic chambers, and repeated by Mr. Nothomb in his essay, never existed for a moment.

Admitting, however, by way of hypothesis, that Great Britain had consented to this proposition, it was not by taking permanent possession of Antwerp that she would have sought for an equivalent. It is infinitely more

probable that she would have insisted upon the immediate demolition of all its fortifications, and its conversion into a free commercial port; that she would have obtained guarantees for the unobstructed navigation of the Scheldt, and the abolition of all duties or payments, save those essentially necessary for pilotage and the preservation of the buoys, banks and landmarks. By this plan essential benefit might have been conferred on the city, a still more favourable mart would have been opened to British commerce, and the danger arising to so important a fortress from the immediate vicinity of the French armies might have been neutralized. But the supposition is untenable. Whatever temptations or equivalents might be offered to Great Britain, they never could be proportioned to the risks and disadvantages. It requires little knowledge of the spirit of the Belgic people, not to be convinced that the cession of a part to France would be tantamount to the ultimate abandonment of the remainder. Indeed, did not urgent political motives render the adhesion of England out of the question, the distance of Antwerp from the sea; the tortuous navigation of the Scheldt, winding for many miles through a channel lying at the mercy of foreign cannon; the isolated position of the fortress, subject to be suddenly cut off and invested, together with various other stratagetical causes, are sufficient to render the military occupation of Antwerp utterly impracticable.

Haughty and unconciliating as was the conduct of the Belgic government towards the Conference, it nevertheless exerted itself to emerge from its isolated position, and to open direct relations with the Courts of St James's, the Tuileries, Berlin, and the German Confederation. Although both General Belliard and Lord Ponsonby had presented themselves to the regent as

joint agents from the Conference to the government, and not as envoys from their respective courts to the unrecognized *locum tenens* of the future sovereign, Mr. Le Hon, a member of the chambers, was dispatched to Paris, where he was solemnly received by Louis-Philippe as envoy extraordinary from the regent, on the 17th March—a virtual recognition of Belgic independence; for the previous mission of Count de Celles must be considered rather as a private negotiation with the government, than a direct embassy to the king. Count d'Arschot also proceeded to London with similar full powers, but was utterly unsuccessful, and, after several fruitless efforts to obtain a public reception, was recalled on the 17th of April.

Whilst Mr. de Behr met with a similar repulse at Berlin, no better fortune attended the efforts of Mr. Michiels at Frankfort, where he was accredited to the Diet, and directed to spare no pains in endeavouring to convince the representatives of the Confederation “that Belgium was not disposed to abdicate her independence in favour of any nation, and thus to destroy the opinion too prevalent in Germany, that the object of the revolution had been a re-union with France.” On Mr. Michiels presenting his credentials, Baron de Munch Bellinghausen replied, “that the Diet (of which he was president) deemed it proper to await the definitive result of the deliberations of the Conference, ere it entered into any direct relations with the Belgic government.” Having failed at Frankfort, Mr. Michiels removed to Mayence, with a view of placing himself in communication with the Rhenish Navigation Commission, assembled at that place, which, after fifteen years’ negotiation, had come to their first preparatory conclusion, upon the 30th of March.

The embarrassments that had arisen from the oppo-

sition of the Belgians, and the non-adhesion of France to the protocols of the 20th and 27th January, were enhanced by constant infractions of the armistice of the 15th December. On the one hand, the Dutch landed near Caloo, where they cut the dykes, inundated the polders, devastated several farms, and took possession of Fort St. Mary, which they subsequently abandoned, after destroying its river faces.\* They made predatory excursions into the Flanders, and in the vicinity of Maestricht, and although the Scheldt had been nominally opened since the 20th January, the navigation of that river was often vexatiously impeded, while that of the Meuse continued rigidly closed. On the other hand the Dutch had to complain of the investment of Maestricht, of the encroachment of Daine troops, and, above all, of Mellinet's undisciplined bands beyond the prescribed limits; of the interruption of the communications of Maestricht with Aix-la-Chapelle and North Brabant; of the rupture of the banks of the Sud Wilhelms-Vaart Canal, at Neer Oeteren; of constant impediments offered to the arrival of vessels at the citadel of Antwerp; of infractions of the *statu quo*, as regarded the offensive works of the city, and of various other violations of the armistice, in direct opposition to the protocol of the 9th of January, and the instructions to Lord Ponsonby, and M. Bresson, of the 18th of the same month.

These instructions, while they guaranteed the free

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\* The *polders* are the low flat grounds in the vicinity of the Scheldt; they are formed from deposits of sand and mud, and in their early stages are called *schorren*. When arrived at a sufficient size and height for the purposes of cultivation, they are intersected with drains and dykes, and brought to a surprising state of fertility. Nearly the whole of the isle of Walcheren, south Beveland, and Dutch Flanders are formed of artificial lands thus rescued from the waters.

navigation of the Scheldt, declared, "that unless all acts of hostility ceased, and the Belgic troops retired forthwith behind the positions occupied by them at 4 p.m. on the 21st November, 1830, and thus left open the communications by the high roads from Aix-la-Chapelle and Eindhoven to Maestricht, the great powers would instantly blockade the Belgic ports, and adopt such other measures as might tend to insure the strict execution of the armistice." These remonstrances having failed to produce any other result than a recriminative note on the part of the Belgians, fresh instructions were issued to Lord Ponsonby on the 17th of February, pronouncing the note in question "to be inadmissible in its pretensions, and evasive in its explanations," and directing him to adopt measures to ascertain from the commandant of Maestricht whether the stipulations of the protocols were duly fulfilled. In consequence of this, Mr. Abercrombie, accompanied by Mr. White, was dispatched to Maestricht on the 17th of February, with instructions to inspect the positions held by the Belgic troops, and the state of the Sud Wilhelms-Vaart canal. Having reached Tongres, the head-quarters of the army of the Meuse, and being furnished with an escort of cavalry, and flag of truce, the two commissioners soon reached the outworks of the fortress. Their arrival having been anticipated by the governor, they were quickly admitted into the body of the place, where they were received with the utmost courtesy by General Dibbets. After executing the object of their mission, and ascertaining, by ocular demonstration, that the complaints of the Dutch were in some measure well-founded—the road to Aix-la-Chapelle being intercepted by Mellinet's volunteers, who occupied Eysden, Gulpen, and other villages on the right bank, while Daine's detachments were pushed close up to the town on the left—the commissioners re-

traced their steps to Brussels, and drew up their report.\*

The reckless insubordination of Mellinet's volunteers, who persisted in occupying the forbidden positions, called for a second visit on the part of the same commissioners, on the 23d of March. At the express desire of the Belgic government, they were attended from Tongres by two officers of Daine's staff; with whom, however, General Dibbets refused to hold communication. This second mission, which had also for its object to intercede for a Belgian subject, condemned to death by the military tribunal of Maestricht, was attended with successful results. The canal was repaired, the volunteers were withdrawn from the right bank of the Meuse, the communications were thrown open, and Daine's troops having fallen back to the prescribed points, all further interference in this quarter was rendered unnecessary. But General Dibbets peremptorily refused to open the navigation of the Meuse, declaring, by a letter addressed to Daine on the 17th of April following, "that so long as the fortress remained in a state of siege, he would not tolerate the passage of an enemy's vessel through the centre of the city." To have acted otherwise would have been contrary to the usages of war, and dangerous to the security of the place, which would thus have been liable to sudden surprise from an enemy, whom the Dutch could not consider bound to

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\* One of the coincidences often attendant on civil war was exemplified on this occasion. The commissioners were accompanied on their ride of inspection by Lieutenant-colonel Nypels, commanding the cavalry of the garrison, whose two brothers they had left at Brussels at the head of divisions and brigades. The two latter had fervidly embraced the national cause; the former had adhered to the Dutch standard.

observe an armistice, which they themselves did not hesitate to violate in the month of August following.

Mr. Abercrombie and his companion, who were the first strangers that had penetrated into the fortress since the revolution, availed themselves of the governor's permission to inspect the most important portion of its defences, and were thus enabled to bear testimony to the judicious measures adopted by General Dibbets for its internal and external security. Notwithstanding the great extent of the place, the comparative weakness of the garrison, and the hostility of a numerous population, Dibbets, a gallant and determined soldier, succeeded in bidding defiance to treachery within, and attack from without.\* The measures adopted were simple and efficacious. The gates and grand guards were transformed into blockhouses, well defended with epaulments for cannon, loop-holed palisades, and banquettes for musquetry. The principal avenues leading to the barracks, *place d'armes*, and magazines, were fenced with strong barricades. Portions of the ramparts were converted into offensive works against the city. The bridge over the Meuse connecting Maestricht with the suburb of Wyck, was mined, intrenched at both extremities, and planted with cannon commanding the stream and adjacent streets. The guns of fort St. Pierre were kept ready to play upon the city in the event of any outbreaking, and the garrison, though harassed by night duty, and restricted in a great measure to salt rations, was healthy and judiciously disposed. In fine, nothing was omitted which skill or energy could suggest for the security of a place requiring a garrison nearly quadruple that under the

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\* The effectives under arms were about 5,500, including a squadron of cuirassiers. The population of Maestricht may be taken at about 20,000 in round numbers.



orders of Dibbets, but which was not more numerous than that holding the citadel of Antwerp. Indeed had similar vigorous measures been adopted by General Chassé from the first moment of placing Antwerp in a state of siege, it may be safely affirmed that a few undisciplined volunteers and ill-armed rabble would never have succeeded in obtaining possession of a fortress flanked by a strong citadel and powerful fleet, and of which the great mass of the population were well-disposed.

But the most serious impediments to the pacific solution of the Batavo-Belgic question, lay in the discussions relative to Luxembourg; the pretensions of the Belgians being diametrically opposed to the views and declarations of the great powers – the former claiming this province as an integral part of Belgium, and the latter pronouncing it to belong to the Germanic confederation. The Belgians argued, that although Luxembourg might from the year 963 to 1461 have been an independent state, and have given sovereigns to the empire, to Bavaria, Hungary, and Poland, yet that on the demise of Elizabeth de Gorlitz, Philip le Bon had succeeded to her inheritance, and had united Luxembourg to the rest of his Belgic possessions, which were then included within the Burgundian circle.\* From that period until its annexation to France in 1795, a space of more than three centuries, this province had invariably followed the destinies of Belgium, passing from the house of Burgundy to that of Spain and Austria, without any special reserves; while the episcopal principality of Liege, in regard to which no claim had been raised, had always formed a state totally distinct from

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\* Philip succeeded to the duchies of Burgundy, counties of Flanders, &c. on the death of his father, John the Dauntless, in 1419.

the Austrian or Spanish possessions, and had been placed within the circle of Westphalia.

It was further argued, that by the law of the 9th Vendémiaire, anno IV. (October, 1795), Luxembourg had been united to France, under the name of the department *des Forêts*, not as a separate province, but as an integral portion of Belgium; the law promulgating this act of appropriation being entitled, “Law regarding the union of Belgium and the county of Liege to the French republic:” whereas, had Luxembourg been considered as a separate state, the preamble would naturally have run, “Law regarding the union of Belgium, the Duchy of Luxembourg, and county of Liege,” &c. &c.

It was likewise obvious, from the wording of the 3rd section of the treaty of Campo Formio, ratified by the 2nd section of that of Luneville, by which the emperor “renounced for himself and successors all right or title to his former Belgic provinces known under the denomination of the Austrian Netherlands,” that his imperial majesty made no exception as regarded Luxembourg, but included it under the general appellation of Belgium. Moreover, by the 8th section of the former treaty, and the 4th of the latter, France took upon herself all engagements due from her new acquisitions to their ancient sovereign, charging them generally to the country without distinction of provinces. The same principle was followed by the Netherlands government, according to the treaty of 11th of October, 1815; and thence arose what was called the Austro-Belgic debt. Such were the principal arguments adduced to show the identity of Luxembourg with Belgium down to the treaty of Vienna.

Other facts were then brought forward to prove that its relations with the Diet no way destroyed its ancient

homogeneity. On the accession of King William, a royal decree, dated 22nd of April, 1815, directed a revision of the old Dutch fundamental law, and declared, Article II., that “the grand duchy of Luxembourg, notwithstanding its particular relations with Germany, must be considered as forming an integral part of the kingdom, as far as concerned its representation and legislative institutions.” A royal proclamation of the 24th of August of the same year, announced the king’s sanction and acceptance of the revised fundamental law, and included the votes of the Luxembourgers in the general list; whereas, had that province formed a separate state, it would have been necessary to have established a distinct classification.\* Not only was Luxembourg assimilated in every respect to the other provinces by the fundamental law, but in order to guard against all possibility of dismemberment on the demise of the king, by the pretensions which Prince Frederick might raise to the grand duchy as his hereditary apanage, in exchange for the four states of Nassau ceded to Prussia—a law of the 25th of May, 1816, enacted, that in consideration of his royal highness having renounced all territorial claims, he should receive a pecuniary indemnity from the national domains in the seignory of Breda; an ancient fief of the Nassau family. It was further asserted, that under no circumstances could the duchy of Bouillon be considered as having been granted to the house of Orange, but that it had been annexed to Luxembourg as forming a part of the Netherlands kingdom.\*

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\* By the 29th section of this fundamental law, it was enacted that the King of the Netherlands could not hold any other crown; therefore, the grand duchy could not have been held separately without a direct violation of the law.

† Note of General Sebastiani to Prince Talleyrand, dated the 1st of March, 1831.

In short, history and previous treaties proved that, for a space of 340 years, Luxembourg had been amalgamated with the other duchies or counties comprising the southern Netherlands; and, that, until the treaty of Vienna, it had never been in the remotest degree connected with Germany, save through the sovereigns which the house of Burgundy had furnished to the trans-Rhenan states.

These arguments, however strong and well-founded, were over-ruled by the great powers. Without attempting to enter into historical researches, or to controvert the principal facts advanced by the Belgians, it was objected that although the grand duchy might during a series of years have formed a part of Belgium, the position of the former had undergone a complete modification by the treaty of the 21st of May, 1815; that after the re-conquest of the Belgic-French departments by the allies, Luxembourg had not been ceded to the Netherlands on the same conditions as the other provinces, but as an exchange, and in compensation to the House of Nassau for their hereditary principalities of Nassau-Dillemburg, Adamar, Siegen and Dietz, abandoned by them to Prussia. That the grand duchy formed a separate domain, appertaining to the German Confederation, who held it as it were in trust for the agnates of the house of Nassau;\* without whose consent, according to the family pact, no portion could be alienated. Finally, it was congenial with the acknow-

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\* The head of these agnates, or next of kin to the Netherlands family, is the Duke of Nassau-Weilbourg, in whom are centered the rights and inheritance of the Usingen and Walram branches. In default of direct issue, either in the male or female line, the Netherlands crown would pass to the descendants of the reigning Duke of Nassau, who is the son of Princess Caroline of Orange, aunt to the king.

ledged principles of equity and civil right, forming the basis of international law, that if the Nassau family were deprived of the equivalent they had received for the surrender of their hereditary possessions in Germany, they should re-enter into possession of those estates, or obtain a compensation elsewhere. These compensations might be of two kinds, territorial or pecuniary. The latter being incompatible with the interests of the Nassau family, and with the policy of the confederation, was impracticable. The former could only be effected by an exchange of equal territorial value and proximity, and of such a nature as should in no way enfeeble the political, or rather stratagetical position of the German Confederation. And herein laid one of the principal obstacles. For the southern frontier of the grand duchy faces a considerable part of Vauban's defensive line. The Confederation being mistress of this province, can throw its forces at a moment's notice upon Thionville, Metz, Longwy, Verdun, Givet, and Sedan. Having the key of the defiles and mountains, and being backed by the fortress of Luxembourg, it is enabled in case of necessity to pour its armies into the plains of Champagne, and thus to open for itself the road to Paris.

Grounding their conclusions on these premises, the Conference cut short the question by adhering to the first and second articles of the basis of separation, annexed to the protocol of the 27th January; peremptorily declaring that "Holland should comprise all the territories, &c. that appertained to the former republic of the United Provinces in the year 1790, and that Belgium should be formed of the rest of the territories that had received the denomination of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the treaties of 1815—except the grand duchy of Luxembourg; which, being held by a different title by the princes of the house of Nassau, con-

stituted, and should continue to constitute a part of the Germanic Confederation." Consequently, "that it was absolutely separated from Belgium, and destined to remain under the sovereignty and relations assigned to it by the treaties of 1815." The position of the duchy of Bouillon was declared to be fixed by the same treaties; but "as this question directly regarded the rights of the grand duke and the Confederation," the Conference declined deciding upon its merits. The above decision established a political antithesis of the most anomalous nature; for while the Conference legitimized the right of insurrection, as far as regarded eight of the Belgic provinces, it made an exception as to the ninth; thus invoking the solemnity of treaties, as applicable to the one, and repudiating it as regarded the remainder.

The acrimonious discussions which had arisen on this subject, combined with the avowed determination of the Belgians not to obtemperate to this decision, or to abandon their Luxembourg brethren, had long occupied the attention of the Diet, which on the previous 21st October 1830 came to the resolution, that "each state of the Confederation in case of need should lend assistance to the others, in so far as this could be effected without danger, or without compromising the safety of its own troops." Hitherto the internal condition of Germany had been such as to engross the exclusive attention of the different governments; but the aspect of affairs became so serious in Luxembourg, the menaces of the Belgians so unequivocal, and the appeals of the King of the Netherlands so urgent, that an order was issued on the 18th March, for the assembling of a confederative army of 24,000 men.\* This force, consisting

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\* Extract from separate protocol of the ninth sitting of the Confederation, 17th and 18th of March, 1831.

of the tenth corps, and the second division of the ninth, was directed to hold itself in readiness to "act against the insurgents, and to advance upon Luxembourg; where it was destined to re-establish the grand-ducal authorities, and to occupy the country until the conclusion of a definitive arrangement."\*

As a preliminary measure, the king issued a proclamation on the 15th of February, appealing to the loyalty of the inhabitants; explaining to them the peculiar position of the grand duchy in regard to the Confederation; stating that the direction of their affairs would henceforth be placed under a distinct administration, presided by Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar, and that a new fundamental law, and system of taxation, analogous to their habits and resources, would be promulgated; promising amnesty and protection to all such as renounced their errors, menacing the refractory with severe penalties, and finally announcing the approaching arrival of a confederative army, destined to support the governor-general in all operations tending to the re-establishment of tranquillity and legal order. This proclamation was accompanied by another from the Duke of Saxe Weimar, who reached the fortress on the 4th of March, having been escorted from Treves by a strong body of Prussian troops. Neither of these documents produced any effect. Not a single inhabitant without the circle of the fortress returned to his allegiance. Far different, however, was the issue of the celebrated counter-proclamation of the regent.†

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\* The tenth corps consists of the contingents of Hanover, Holstein, Brunswick, the two Mecklenbours, Oldenbourg, the three Lippes, Hambourg, Bremen, and Lubeck, forming a nominal total of about 30,000. The 9th corps includes Saxony, Nassau, and eleven small principalities.

† See Appendix. No. 30.

This bold and energetic declaration, not only created an extraordinary sensation in Luxembourg, but in Holland. The result was an application from Mr. Falck to Lord Palmerston, dated the 23d of March, denouncing the regent's proclamation as "an indubitable proof of the aggressive projects of the Belgians, of their open and contemptuous opposition to the five powers, and of the imminent danger of immediate hostilities;" and further calling upon the plenipotentiaries "forthwith to advise the means of furnishing a body of auxiliary troops for the defence of the Dutch territory; and this independent of such other measures as the Conference might adopt for the prompt and entire accomplishment of the stipulations of the 12th protocol, annex A, to which the Netherlands government had already given its full and complete adhesion." The dangers that menaced Holland and the peace of Europe were, however, fortunately averted: the concentration of the confederative troops was arrested; affairs in Luxembourg were allowed to continue in *statu quo*; and though it was impossible to prevent partial infractions of the armistice, especially in the vicinity of Antwerp and in the Flanders, the general negotiation began to assume a more satisfactory aspect. This was mainly to be attributed to the check the Russians had met with before Praga on the 23d of February, the defeat of Geismar at Dembe on the 10th of March, and the gradual development of the system of the French ministry, who took office on the 13th of March.

In the meantime the Orangists were far from idle; the refusal of the Duke of Nemours, the menacing attitude of the Germanic Confederation; the more than tacit encouragement of some of the great powers; the feebleness of the regent's government; the jealousies and the venality of some superior officers; the ill-dis-



guised sympathies of others ; the prevailing insubordination of the army ; the utter want of homogeneity in the various civil departments ; the discontent of tradesmen and manufacturers ; and the receipt of large sums destined for purposes of corruption—these things combined, gave a new stimulus to the prince's partisans, and eventually led to the projected movement of March.

The ramifications of this plot were more extensive than those connected with the affair of Ernest Gregoire ; for it is unquestionable, that many wealthy nobles and some officers, with a portion of the capitalists, manufacturers, and shopkeepers of Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels, were desirous of the prince's return—not from any individual devotion to his royal highness, but from an eager desire to free themselves from that state of anarchy and depression, from which they assumed there was no other issue than through the medium of the Orange family. They were encouraged in this idea by direct assurances from Baron Krudener, and indirect hints from the British mission, that these views coincided with those of the four great powers ; who, although they peremptorily declined all active co-operation, would gladly have availed themselves of the first successful demonstration, to recognize a selection that would have removed many of the principal impediments to a solution, and facilitated the arrangement of the Luxembourg question, as far as regarded the agnates of the house of Nassau.

The three great objects of the prince's agents were, to multiply the number of their adherents in the army ; to secure the neutrality, if not the co-operation, of the civic guards ; and to prepare the public mind for an out-breaking, by distributing anonymous placards and addresses in favour of the prince ; while the Orangist journals boldly advocated his cause in the most glowing

terms. No efforts, no means of corruption, were omitted to obtain the active assistance of the bold, and to insure the passive adhesion of the timid. These latter were by far the most numerous; for although none but Generals Van der Smissen and Nypels, with Colonel Borremans, Edeline, and a few others of inferior note, were directly compromised, strong suspicion attached to others, who, in the event of success, would have been as ready perhaps to renounce the national banner, as they had been prompt in abandoning that of the king. Less adventurous, but more crafty than their comrades, these latter held themselves prepared to turn with the tide, and either to swear allegiance to the prince, or to proclaim their fidelity to the revolution, according as the issue should determine. Thus, in most instances, the principal instigators escaped, while their tools, and amongst them Borremans, were the only victims.

The project of the Orangists was not, however, devoid of boldness; and had it been founded on just hopes of general co-operation, or untainted by the certainty of entailing the most fearful disasters, not only upon Belgium but upon Europe, would have merited all that support and encouragement which it was supposed to have obtained from British diplomacy. The directing committee, which maintained relations with the Dutch emissaries at Aix-la-Chapelle and Lisle, and with the prince in London, relied for success principally upon Van der Smissen, the boldest and most ambitious of the Orange partisans; who had been among the first to oppose the king at the first outbreaking of the revolution, and who now sought farther honours and renumerations by renewing his connexion with the house of Nassau.

It was intended that this officer, then acting as governor of Antwerp, should gain over General Nypels and the garrison, seize on the fortress, proclaim the

prince, and place himself in connexion with the citadel and fleet. This was to be the signal for the arrival of his royal highness, who had disembarked on the 20th, at Rotterdam, having ill-advisedly returned to Holland for this purpose. The lancers, with some infantry and field-pieces from Malines, were to march so as to arrive at Brussels before day-break. Here they were to be joined by Borremans's light infantry regiment, who were to be seduced by money, inflamed with liquor, and encouraged by assurances "that the garrison of Antwerp and the Meuse army had declared for the prince, and that his royal highness was on the road to the capital, supported by Van der Smissen, Nypels, and Daine, at the head of 12,000 men." It was thus hoped to effect by deception, that which could not be accomplished by argument. The regent, ministers, and principal authors of the revolution, were to be seized and conveyed to some place of security; diligences with post horses being destined for this purpose. The army of the Meuse, where a few officers wavered in their duty, and where many were disgusted with the actual state of affairs, was to be won by similar means. Detachments were to be thrown out upon Louvain and Liege, while the troops at Ghent were expected to operate a simultaneous rising. It was proposed to secure the neutrality of the Brussels civic guards, through the agency of their chiefs, and their own natural disinclination to civil war. In such case, they were to be employed in maintaining internal tranquillity, while a provisional government was to be established in the prince's name, to be composed of Van der Smissen and other influential persons. A long list of proscription was prepared, for it was considered essentially necessary to make some striking examples. Brussels was thus destined to become the theatre of the most vindictive reaction.

The day selected for this undertaking was the 24th of

March ; but through the want of accord and discretion of some of the chiefs, and the timidity and lukewarmness of others ; through the vigilance of the patriotic association, and eventually through the revelations of a staff-officer, who had been admitted into the confederacy, the secret was divulged, and vigorous measures adopted to overwhelm the conspirators. Orders were instantly issued for the arrest of Van der Smissen, Nypels, and several officers of lancers, while Borremans was given up by his own men at Brussels, and had nearly fallen a victim to the fury of the populace, whose exasperation was raised to the highest pitch. Van der Smissen, having obtained timely information, fled to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he was joined by three or four others of minor importance. Such is the most accredited outline of this plot.

Independent of the fearful consequences that must have attended its execution, even had it met with partial success, it was evident, on a close investigation, that the resources of the Orangists were inadequate to the object, and that the cause of the prince was essentially anti-national. The active co-operation of a few superior officers, and the passive adherence of others, was perhaps secured ; but nearly the whole of the inferior grades, as well as the great mass of the troops, were warmly attached to the new order of things. Indeed, so well convinced were the chiefs of this fact, that it was even thought imprudent to communicate the plot to the subalterns or soldiers of the cavalry and artillery, who passed the night of the 23d in readiness to move from Malines, until they should reach the gates of Brussels. There was neither unity, confidence, nor combination among the leaders, nor could the slightest reliance be placed upon the men. Money was lavishly expended, and promises returned ; but when the hour for action

approached, there were scarcely a dozen who were prepared to face the coming peril. Some from lack of courage, and others from a dread of civil war. The tens of thousands that were stated to be panting to draw the sword only existed in the imagination of the ring-leaders.

Every thing appeared to depend upon the influence of Van der Smissen over the Antwerp garrison, and on that of D'Hoogvorst with the Brussels civic guards. But the conduct of the one had not been such as to secure respect or confidence; while the other, whose popular name had been lavishly quoted as an inducement to inveigle others, declined all co-operation; though, from motives of generosity, he promised not to betray the propositions which had been made to him. In addition to this, the clergy, Catholic nobility, and population, urged and excited by the association, were infuriated against the Orangists, and would indisputably have risen in mass. Thus a scene of anarchy and bloodshed must have ensued, the results of which were fraught with incalculable evils. The pillage of Mathieu's house, and the destruction of other property, were fearful proofs of the facility with which the populace might be excited to deeds of violence.

The attention of the prince's partisans was also principally directed to the re-conquest of the capital. They argued, that as Brussels had given the first signal of revolt, and was the central focus of revolution, the provinces would again follow her example, in the event of any political change. An erroneous calculation. For admitting that Brussels, Ghent, and Antwerp had opened their gates, it is incontestable that Liege, Verviers, Mons, and Bruges, with the greater part of the Flanders, and the whole of Hainault and the Wallon country, would have hoisted the French tri-colour,

rather than submit to the dominion of any member of the expelled family. An inveterate civil war would thus have been the precursor of a general conflagration. But one of the most serious obstacles to the whole plan was the decided opposition of the king himself; who, far from evincing any disposition to renounce his own claims in favour of the prince, threw every obstacle in the way of his partisans, and uhesitatingly declared his determination never to recognize him.

In proportion as the plot advanced towards maturity, and the Orangists began to unfold their plans to the British envoy, it became necessary for him to sift the matter to its innermost recesses; to poise well the prospects of success or defeat, and to adopt such measures as best accorded with European interests; to which those of the House of Nassau were necessarily subservient. And here was one of the principal errors of that party. The leading feature of their policy has been invariably tainted with individuality. Their apparent aim was to identify Europe with themselves, in lieu of identifying themselves with Europe. The welfare and interests of other states were matters of too little consideration with them, and in despite of every declaration of disinterestedness, it was evident from the arguments used, and from the tenor of the negotiations, that the question of dynasty was antecedent to that of the nation.

To elicit the true position of the case from men so sanguinely blind as the Orangists, was no easy matter. For a length of time their representations and assurances were successful in misleading those who were, perhaps, somewhat the more credulous, from the accordance of such assertions with the interest and wishes of the British government. At length, however, the feebleness and inefficacy of their resources came to light. The

real state of public feeling became more apparent, and the abyss into which they were urging themselves and others was exposed in all its fearful nudity. As soon as the truth was unveiled, it became the paramount duty of Lord Ponsonby both to his government and to Europe—indeed, it was an act of humanity to the confederates themselves—to withdraw all countenance from a plot which threatened a thousand dangerous consequences, without offering a single prospect of ultimate success. Lord Ponsonby deemed it essential to address them with the candour and firmness of a statesman whose eye had penetrated through the mist that veiled their own. He consequently exerted all his private influence—official voice he had none in this matter—to induce those who consulted him to pause ere they plunged their country into inevitable civil war; or, what was of still greater moment, ere they drove her into the arms of France. The latter, and perhaps both, were otherwise inevitable.

Such was the simple and unvarnished state of the case. The moment was critical, and the slightest delay might have produced the very issue which it was the special object of Lord Ponsonby's mission to avert. For the Orangists, like the republicans, were more desirous to induce than to avert that general war, which they looked on as the surest means of producing ultimate restoration. But what were the interests of a nation or dynasty, compared with those of Europe? To have adhered to the one at the expense of the other might have suited the views of the prince's partisans, but it would have been an act of criminal imbecility on the part of a British agent. For having thus conscientiously performed his duty, and thereby preserved Belgium from anarchy and invasion, Lord Ponsonby has been exposed to the foulest calumnies on the part of both Orangists and republicans. The one, because he opened

the eyes of the Conference to the danger that menaced Europe, should they persist in supporting an impracticable project ; and the other, because he zealously fostered those moderate constitutional principles by which general peace has been maintained. Nay, so far did the former carry their disregard to fact, that they did not hesitate to accuse Lord Ponsonby of suppressing Orangist petitions ; of exposing the petitioners to the vengeance of the regent's government, by giving up their names ; and, lastly, of having betrayed the March plot.

“ It is easy, but disgraceful,” says an able German publicist,\* in stigmatizing these unfounded calumnies, “ to retire to some dark corner, and thence to cast poisonous filth on that which is holiest on earth—the honour of another. This is the more odious, since no reparation can ever sufficiently compensate for the original injury. Therefore, when shameless reports are spread abroad, at the expense of truth and honour, it is the duty of honest men to step forth and expose them.”

“ ————— Absentem amicum

Qui non defendit alio culpante——

—— Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto.”

The following letter from the Regent of Belgium, touching the two first assertions, will suffice to shew the degree of reliance to be placed on the other :—

“ *Gingelhom, near St. Trond,*  
20th March, 1832.

“ SIR,—I have this instant received your letter of the 19th of March, and hasten to do myself the honour to state in reply, that I have read the letter signed Le Ch. V——, inserted in the *Lynx*, reported by the *Independant*, and of which you have forwarded me a copy.

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\* “ Abfall der Niederlande, Von Dr. C. M. Friedlander.” Hamburg, 1833.



I can assure you, Sir, that everything in that letter relating to a *pretended* communication made to me by Lord Ponsonby, touching a petition signed by many notables of Brussels, Ghent, and Antwerp, tending to demand of the Conference of London the return to Belgium of the Orange Nassau family, is *absolutely false*. I think, Sir, that this declaration will be satisfactory to you, both as a private individual and as the friend of Lord Ponsonby. I authorize you, Sir, to make whatever use you may think proper of the present.\*

(Signed) "E. SURLET DE CHOKIER."

"To Charles White, Esq. &c. &c."

"P.S. Having been indisposed for a fortnight, it is only with great difficulty that I have been enabled to write these few lines *in favour of truth*."

During some days subsequent to the discovery of this plot, the scene of anarchy, terror and confusion that reigned at Brussels baffles all description. The patriotic association, strengthened by the adhesion of almost every individual of note in the country, issued a manifest, couched in the most ardent language, and, in fact, assumed powers that rendered government almost impracticable, by exercising a species of terrorism over men's minds, which threatened a fearful repetition of the painful scenes of the first French revolution. Fortunately, no blood was spilt; the excitement of the mob seemed to evaporate with the destruction of property; and although not only Orangists but other citizens were often menaced, the storm gradually subsided, and gave way to a state of comparative tranquillity.

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\* The letter signed "Le Ch. V—," alluded to by the ex-regent, contained a series of violent diatribes against Lord Ponsonby. These were not only refuted by Baron Surlet, but ably answered in several foreign journals by Dr. Friedlander.

## CHAPTER VIII.

FRANCE ADHERES TO THE PROTOCOLS—CONGRESS DETERMINES TO DEFEND LUXEMBOURG, AND DECREES A GRANT OF SIX MILLIONS AND THE ENROLMENT OF 59,000 CIVIC GUARDS—THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY OFFERED TO GENERAL LAMARQUE—MR. LEBEAU ADDRESSES A LETTER TO THE DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER—CHANGE OF POLICY ON THE PART OF THE GREAT POWERS, WHO ABANDON THE PRINCE OF ORANGE, AND ENCOURAGE THE SELECTION OF PRINCE LEOPOLD—LORD PONSONBY PROCEEDS TO ENGLAND—INFRACTION OF THE ARMISTICE AT ANTWERP—CHASSE'S MODERATION—GENERAL CONDITION OF BELGIUM—DISORDERS IN THE CONGRESS AND PROVINCES—LORD PONSONBY RETURNS—HIS LETTER TO MR. LEBEAU—THE BELGIANS REFUSE TO ADHERE TO THE BASIS OF SEPARATION—LORD PONSONBY AND GENERAL BELLIARD QUIT BRUSSELS—SELECTION AND ELECTION OF PRINCE LEOPOLD—CRITICAL POSITION OF THE BELGIC MINISTRY—THE EIGHTEEN ARTICLES—DISTURBANCES AT BRUSSELS, AND DISORDER IN CONGRESS—THE ARTICLES ARE ADOPTED—MR. LEBEAU'S SPEECH—HE RESIGNS OFFICE—KING LEOPOLD ACCEPTS THE CROWN, ARRIVES IN BELGIUM, AND IS INAUGURATED—CONGRESS DISSOLVED.

THE change in the French ministry on the 13th of March soon wrought a salutary effect on the operations of the Conference. The cloud that had produced "a momentary difference of opinion" was dissipated by the formal announcement of Prince Talleyrand, "that France adhered to the protocol of the 20th of January; that she entirely approved the limits therein indicated for Belgium; that she admitted the neutrality and inviolability of her territory; and that she would not recognize any sovereign for Belgium, unless that sovereign fully acceded to the conditions and clauses of the fundamental basis; and that, in consequence of these principles, the French government considered the grand duchy as absolutely separated from Belgium, and as

being destined to remain under the sovereignty and relations assigned to it by the treaties of 1815." This declaration, promulgated in the protocol of the 17th of April (No. 21), was accompanied by the most satisfactory expressions of amity, and of the earnest desire of France "to remain united with her allies, and to co-operate with them in the maintenance of general peace, and the treaties that constitute its basis." A singular contradiction, when opposed to the actual violation of those very treaties consecrated by the very protocol itself. The unexpected adhesion of France, which created a profound sensation at Brussels, was officially communicated to the Belgic envoy at Paris on the 15th of April, by a note from Count Sebastiani, who availed himself of this opportunity to recommend a similar course to the Belgic government. But advice so diametrically opposed to the will of congress, was disdainfully rejected; indeed, no minister dared to introduce the proposition, at a moment when the state of fermentation and popular effervescence was such as to menace an immediate invasion of Holland. A second protocol of the 17th of April (No. 22), still further demonstrated the unanimity of the great powers, and their unflinching resolution not to swerve from the fundamental basis, which was declared "*irrevocable*." It further stated, that it was on these conditions only that the great powers would consent to recognize the independence of Belgium, and that if these propositions were not accepted, all relations between her and the five powers must cease, and that Lord Ponsonby should forthwith quit Brussels, and the Belgic envoy be required to leave Paris.

Finding that, as long as the slightest want of accord was supposed to exist between the French cabinet and the Conference, no arguments could produce any effect on the minds of the regent's ministers, or rather of the congress, both of which were controlled or intimidated

by the patriotic association, General Belliard held it advisable to proceed in person to Paris, on the 8th, in order to expose to his government the real state of public opinion, and to urge the necessity of adopting some more decided line of policy. However sincerely devoted the general might have been to the welfare of a people whose confidence and affection he had gained in earlier life, he had a paramount duty to perform to Europe. The tenacity with which they insisted on retaining the whole of Luxembourg, without compensation or equivalent to the house of Nassau, was so diametrically opposed to the decisions of the great powers and the Confederation, and so pregnant with danger, that no alternative remained but to discountenance this pretension by adhering to the 20th protocol, or to support it by the most unequivocal demonstrations. There could be no hesitation between two systems, one of which opened a vista of honourable and durable peace, whilst the other contained the germs of an immediate, and perhaps interminable war.

Nothing daunted, the Belgians prepared to meet the coming storm. In a council of ministers held on the night of Belliard's departure, it was unanimously resolved to defend Luxembourg against all aggression, and thus to sacrifice all rather than abandon a part. An extraordinary grant of six millions of florins was voted by congress for the enrolment of ten battalions of volunteer sharp-shooters; for organizing the foresters of the domains in one regiment, and for calling 50,000 of the civic guards of the first ban into active service. Notwithstanding the convention guaranteeing the *statu quo* at Antwerp, vigorous measures were adopted to arm the forts below the city, to strengthen the means of offence and defence on the river face, and to protect the interior from surprise, by a double line of barricades and intrenchments on the side of the citadel. The patriotic

association, which had doubtless been mainly instrumental in overwhelming the Orangists, and which, alike inimical to negotiation and restoration, loudly called for war, now issued another proclamation, terminating with this exciting passage "To arms ! to arms ! brave Belgians. Let us march in mass to Luxembourg, let our gathering cry be—*victory and father-land !*"

The want of a general in chief of acknowledged talent, and the dearth of experienced superior officers, especially in the artillery, was so intensely felt, that in defiance of the opposition of Mr. Van de Weyer, and other confident patriots, who looked upon such a measure as dishonourable to the nation, a bill passed congress on the 11th of May, authorizing government to employ a foreign commander-in-chief, three generals on the staff, four field officers, and thirty-two captains and subalterns in the artillery. Lamarque, Guilleminot, and Sir R. Wilson were spoken of. Indeed, direct overtures were made to the former and other of his countrymen, but the terms demanded by them were utterly inadmissible. This, combined with the complaints and outcries of the army, which was far from admitting its own incapacity, induced the government to limit the admission to a few officers of inferior rank ; an act of improvidence, to which the subsequent disasters of August might in a great measure be attributed. For, independent of the absence of any striking military capacity, the events of March had so greatly increased the demoralization of the troops, by enfeebling the respect of the soldiers for their officers, and by filling the breasts of the latter with mutual doubts, jealousies, and mistrust, that the generals, who were themselves the objects of suspicion, had neither the necessary confidence in their own strength, or in those under their command, to enforce discipline and accelerate organization.

If ever there was a moment morally and physically favourable for Dutch aggression, it was this. "Anarchy," says Mr. Nothomb, "universally prevailed. It was in the laws, in men's minds, in the administration, and in the army." Distracted by contending parties, but still not disheartened, the nation was without a rallying point. Deprived of the internal and external influence of a sovereign, it had the mere shadow of a monarchy, cankered with all the vices of a republic. Had it been attacked sharply, energetically, it would have fallen an easy prey to its invaders, and would have been forced to yield at discretion, or compelled to cast itself into the arms of France. But the disposition of the great powers having assumed a bias essentially favourable to Holland, it is highly problematical whether France would have risked a general convulsion by accepting the gift. The dilatory proceedings of the Netherlands government were, however, destined to save Belgium, and perhaps European peace, by adding another to that long series of political and military anachronisms, which had been the leading characteristic of their movements from the earliest moment of Belgic popular discontent.

The unequivocal adhesion of France to the rejected protocols, the increasing amity and unanimity of the five great powers, combined with the urgent remonstrances of Belliard and Lord Ponsonby, at length began to temper the belligerent ardour of the Belgic government, and to open its eyes to the absolute necessity of a more conciliatory system. The principle of intervention, which had been the constant source of demurring, in despite of the adoption of the armistice by which that principle was directly recognized, had been explained and admitted on the 2d of April, by Mr. Lebeau. In defending his own policy, he skilfully turned the *onus* of primitive admission on his predecessors, who had ac-

cepted the suspension of arms, and bound themselves to execute the conditions imposed upon them ; conditions immediately emanating from the two first protocols. Not satisfied with thus indirectly admitting the arbitration of the great powers, and with endeavouring to give the diplomatic relations a more extended sphere of action, Mr. Lebeau was desirous to establish direct negotiations with Holland, by which he hoped to facilitate the march of affairs, and to determine many points at issue more speedily than by the circuitous medium of the Conference, whose members were comparatively ignorant of the precise bearings of many questions directly concerning the mutual interests of the two parties.

With this view, Mr. Lebeau addressed a letter to Mr. Verstolk Van Soelen, on the 9th of May, setting forth “ that the Belgic revolution had nothing hostile to the true interests of Holland, or the general feeling of Europe ; that the separation of the two countries was accomplished *de jure* and *de facto* by the will of the two people, and the *fiat* of the States-General ; that according to the very declaration of Mr. Verstolk in 1826, the union of the two nations did not originate from any anticipated advantages likely to be derived by Holland, or in a desire to flatter that country, but from the necessity of finding a new guarantee for European equilibrium ; and that they were placed on the same line, neither of them being intended to be considered as an accessory to the other ;” an assertion that sanctioned both the past and eventual independence of both. After pointing out the impolicy of continuing an armed *statu quo*, and of increasing the chances of war for the sake of a few points, which might probably be arranged by direct negotiation, and arguing that, under every circumstance, whether of peace or war, the principal parties must ultimately be compelled to treat with each other, Mr. Lebeau proposed that “ three commissioners

from Holland, and an equal number from Belgium, should be directed to meet at Aix-la-Chapelle, Valenciennes, or some other neutral town, in order to draw up such a project of arrangement as might be submitted to the approval of the irrespective legislative chambers."

This communication reached its destination on the 13th, but remained unnoticed. Indeed, it was not probable that the Dutch government would take cognizance of propositions which omitted all allusion to the basis of separation, and the conditions attached to the independence of Belgium by the Conference, and which would have entailed an interchange of full powers as between two co-equal nations, and thus elicited a virtual acknowledgment of that independence which the cabinet of the Hague was secretly resolved to refuse, unless upon conditions utterly incompatible with the vital interests of Belgium. A note on this subject was, however, subsequently addressed by the Dutch envoys to the plenipotentiaries, wherein they declared, "that it was the fixed determination of their government to adhere to the reciprocal engagements entered into with the five powers on the principles laid down by the 12th protocol," and artfully complained of the delays thrown in the way of definitive arrangement, being further augmented by the tenor of the 23rd protocol of the 10th of May, whereby the Belgians were allowed until the first of June to consent to the proposed stipulations. They earnestly dwelt upon the desire of the king "to insure the prompt solution of a state of affairs onerous to his subjects, and dangerous to the repose of Europe; and stated that, from the 1st of June, his majesty would consider himself free from all engagements, and at liberty to act as he might judge most salutary for the attainment of the general object." In a second note of the same date, Messrs. Falck and Van Zeulen de Nyevelt denounced various acts of direct aggression committed by the Bel-



gic troops on Dutch vessels navigating the Scheldt, which had necessitated reprisals on the part of General Chassé ; and they warmly protested against the perpetual menaces of the Belgians to renew those hostilities, "*the cessation of which was placed under the immediate guarantee of the five powers.*"\*

In the meantime three most important facts had become apparent to the French and British envoys at Brussels—namely, the utter impracticability of attempting to bring back any member of the Nassau family without civil war, and the aid of foreign bayonets, in which France would have found the *casus belli* ; the equal impossibility of obtaining the consent of congress to the territorial arrangements laid down by the basis of separation, wherein the confederation would have found the *casus fœderis* ; and finally, the urgency of proceeding forthwith to the election of a sovereign, as the sole means of arresting that career of anarchy, into which the nation was being rapidly propelled by intemperate patriots at home and adventurers from abroad. It was no easy matter to bring the great powers to feel the force of this syllogism ; but facts, more powerful than arguments, at length tended to overcome their scepticism, and entailed a change of policy. Thus, ere long the tide that had set strongly against Belgium, turned in its favour, and her independence and European peace were guaranteed. The imminence of the peril was such, that no time was lost by the different courts in instructing their plenipotentiaries to give full encouragement to the acceptance of Prince Leopold, on whom Mr. Van de Weyer, and, on his resignation, Mr. Lebeau, had skilfully fixed their eyes, as the only prince who offered all the necessary qualifications. The abandonment of the Prince of

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\* Notes of the Netherlands plenipotentiaries, dated the 21st of May, 1831.

Orange, and the adoption of Prince Leopold, was one of the most extraordinary acknowledgments of the force of events over previsions, and of their own impuissance, that could have been given by the three absolute powers.

This concession, reluctantly wrung from them at the eleventh hour, was, however, more easy to be obtained than the total cession of Luxembourg from the Belgians. On this point they rejected all amicable suggestions, and defied all hostile menaces. Nor was it without the utmost difficulty that Lord Ponsonby and his colleague were eventually enabled to induce them to listen to a species of compromise. Seeing no prospect of deterring them from their hostile intentions, and fearing that the communication of the 22nd and 23rd protocols might still further irritate the public mind, and urge the association, or rather the government, to some irretrievable act of indiscretion, Lord Ponsonby determined to proceed to London. The object of his journey was, firstly, to portray the reckless exasperation of the public mind, and the incapability of the government to stem the tide of national will, which daily betrayed itself by acts of riot, outrage and cries for war; and secondly, to assure the Conference of the impossibility of obtaining the Belgian adhesion to the 22nd and 23rd protocols, without some modification of the stipulations, and thereby to endeavour not only to prepare the powers for the election of Prince Leopold, but, if possible, to obtain their sanction to the cession of the whole or part of the grand duchy, in return for a just compensation. The representations of Lord Ponsonby, who quitted Brussels on the 13th of May, corroborated by General Belliard's reports to Prince Talleyrand, and those of Mr. Devaux, who had been sent on a special mission to England, so far produced a favourable result, that the plenipotentiaries pronounced their readiness to open a negotiation with the king, grand-duke, in order to procure his majesty's

consent to the cession of the grand duchy in the manner proposed. At the same time they insisted (by their protocol of the 21st of May, No. 24), on the preliminary adhesion of Belgium to the basis of separation; and in the event of farther opposition, Lord Ponsonby and General Belliard were directed to execute the instructions consigned in the 22d and 23d protocols, to break off all farther relations, to quit Brussels forthwith, and to declare that the slightest infraction of the armistice would be considered as an *ipso facto* act of hostility against the five powers.

During the absence of Lord Ponsonby, various infractions of the convention of November took place at Antwerp, which excited the just indignation of General Chassé, and the terror of the inhabitants. Indeed, had not that officer evinced a more than ordinary degree of moderation and forbearance, inevitable destruction must have fallen upon the city. Independent of the Belgians having repeatedly fired on the boats of the squadron, and other Dutch vessels ascending the Scheldt, they had opened new embrasures in the ramparts, added to the guns in fort Montebello, and commenced throwing up and arming a range of batteries on the prolonged faces of St. Laurent and its adjacent bastion. These and other violations of the *statu quo* having been the subject of constant but ineffectual remonstrances on the part of General Chassé, he ordered his people to occupy the Lunette St. Laurent, on the 12th of May, and immediately commenced connecting that outwork with the salient angle of the raveline in its rear, by means of a double covered way.

Although, according to the capitulation and armistice of the 1st of November,\* Chassé had an undoubted

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\* See Appendix 26.

right to the possession of the Lunette, and ground in front to the distance of 300 yards, he had abstained from occupying it, and had permitted free intercourse between the city and country, by the road leading from the Beguine's-gate to Boom. The aggressive works of the Belgians not only being carried on within the limits of the fortress, but endangering the safety of the Lunette, Chassé first threw in a small detachment, and then occupied it in force, in order "to guarantee himself from attack, and not with the slightest hostile intentions."\* Intercourse between the city and its vicinity, by the Boom road, being thus interrupted, the country people, populace and soldiers, especially the undisciplined volunteers, over whom their officers had but little control, expressed great discontent and irritation. Even the authorities themselves questioned General Chassé's right, and raised difficulties as to the meaning of the convention. Great excitement consequently prevailed amongst the lower orders. Groups issuing from the gates assembled within a few yards of the Dutch working parties. Insults were offered, and stones thrown. The soldiers of the citadel at first remonstrated, and this failing, a few shots were fired in the air, which were replied to by renewed insults. Amongst others, a body of armed individuals rushed forward, and planted the Belgic tri-colour within a short distance of the fort. A serjeant and four men then fired; the Belgian volunteers and sentries immediately returned the shots, and in a few seconds a general discharge of musketry commenced, and was maintained from the citadel and ramparts, until night and the exertions of General Dufailly, the military commandant of Antwerp, put an end to an affair that

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\* Extract of General Chassé's letter, 17th of May, 1831.

had nearly produced a second and still more terrible bombardment than that of 1830.

Such was the substance of the report made by General Belliard and Mr. White, who proceeded to Antwerp at the pressing solicitation of the Belgic government, in order if possible to deprecate the just wrath of Chassé, and to employ their exertions in obtaining a cessation, not only of all farther hostilities, but of those offensive works, that were an incontestable violation of the rights of nations and of military laws.\* “We have admired your prudence,” said the commissioners in their despatch to Chassé of the 19th of May, “and will make known your noble conduct under these difficult circumstances; and further, we shall owe it to your prudence that peace has not been disturbed.” The compliment was well merited, for such was the unwarrantable conduct of the Belgians on this occasion, that General Chassé would have been fully borne out by the laws of war, had he forthwith employed the terrible means of repression at his disposal. General Chassé’s conduct has been hitherto criticized with severity; but on this occasion he certainly deserved the gratitude of Antwerp for his humanity, forbearance, and the readiness with which he assented to the pacific intervention of the French and English commissioners.

A passage from one of his letters written on this occasion, will place his conduct in a still more meritorious light. “This present morning, the 27th of May, the Belgians have been seen working with activity on a dépôt of fascines within musket-shot of St. Laurent, and within the enclosure of a small property belonging to me, of which I was the first to consume the habitation when the citadel was originally placed in a state of

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\* *Recueil de Pièces Diplomatiques*, p. 194. La Haye, 1831.

siege. This fresh devastation is indifferent to me. I wish that all those that may arise from this state of affairs, could be concentrated within that spot." A noble sentiment, and a fair ground for arguing that, if the bombardment of 1830 was barbarous and uncalled for, it is highly probable that General Chassé acted under the influence of superior orders, and not from any vindictive impulse of his own.

The intervention and remonstrances of General Beliard, though they caused an immediate cessation of actual hostilities, were insufficient to obtain a discontinuance of the aggressive works. So powerless, or so insincere were the authorities, that in despite of a proclamation appealing to the honour of the Belgic troops, and in defiance of the assurances and apparent exertions of the officers, the batteries were completed and armed. General Chassé on his side, therefore, continued his own labours, and the subject was allowed to fall into abeyance. One circumstance attending the negotiation remains to be noticed ; the more so, since it is indisputable that the safety of Antwerp depended on the will of the Dutch general ; and consequently, that any attempt made to intercept the pacific exertions of the commissioners, was a perilous act, pregnant with destruction to the city. In consequence of a pressing dispatch from General Chassé, denouncing the continued aggression of the Belgians, and his resolution to employ the most vigorous means of retaliation, General Beliard and Mr. Abercrombie again waited on the regent, and energetically insisted on immediate orders being issued to put a stop to this violation of the rights of nations, and holding him and his government responsible for any misfortunes that might befall Antwerp. The regent having readily acceded, a dispatch acknowledging General Chassé's rights, and communicating the

intentions of the Belgic government, was written by the commissioners, and forwarded at midnight on the 19th of May by a staff officer, with strict injunctions to look to its delivery before daybreak. Four days elapsed, when a courier from Sir Charles Bagot, at the Hague, announced that this letter had never reached its destination. Immediate inquiries were set on foot by Mr. Abercrombie,\* but no explanation could be obtained ; and it was not till many months subsequent, that it was discovered that this dispatch, on which the safety of a populous city might have depended, had been intercepted by the military commandant, and detained by the order of the very government that had so anxiously demanded the interposition of the commissioners.

To offer a graphic picture of the internal condition of Belgium at this period, would be nearly impossible. Confusion, misrule, and distrust were rife throughout the land. The sacred name of liberty was a cloak for repeated excesses. At Brussels the inhabitants were kept in a constant state of alarm, from anticipated riots, or from actual violation of the law ; now got up under the pretext of striking terror into the hearts of the Orangists, and now fomented by native anarchists or foreign propagandists, many of whom flocked to the city, invaded the press, and introducing themselves into the galleries of the chamber, attempted to overawe the legislative proceedings by the most vociferous outcries.† The hall of congress was often the arena of the most extravagant and boisterous discussions ; rendered still more disorderly by frequent appeals to the passions of the

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\* Who acted as charge d'affaires in the absence of Lord Ponsonby.

† A letter was addressed at this time to the Belgic congress by a French half-pay officer, offering, in the name of General Gustave Dumas, a legion of from 3,000 to 20,000 men, to be called the Legion La Fayette.

public from various leading members of the movement party. Every proposition, indeed every sentence tending to moderation or concession, was met with clamour and interruption. The demon of convulsion and recklessness appeared to possess a portion of the deputies and their auditors. To adopt the maxim "aid thyself, and heaven will aid thee,"—to exclaim, "in fifteen days a king, or war with Holland; no more negotiations!"—and to threaten annihilation to the old Netherlands, was nothing. Relying on being able to drag France into the same vortex with themselves, they proposed to summon the Conference to fix a definite period for arrangement; and this failing, to bid defiance to united Europe. They read of the glorious deeds of the Poles, and fancied that their own declamations would produce the same effect; utterly forgetting that the mighty and unequal struggle carried on by the former was based on unity of purpose, if not on unity of action, and above all, on the most heroic devotion, patriotism, and self-abnegation of all classes, from the illustrious Czartoryski down to the lowest Masouri. On the banks of the Vistula the cry for liberty was universal. The noblest and best of the nation eagerly offered up their blood and treasure as holocausts at her shrine. Even young and lovely women seized the lance, bestrode the war-horse, and rode forth to battle. On the borders of the Scheldt, with few exceptions, the wealthiest closed their coffers, the noblest shrunk from their country's cause, and the fairest cried aloud for chains. In this struggle, the people, though often misled, almost alone stood pure.

The regent, though possessing many private virtues, was inexperienced and feeble as a public man. The good intentions of the ministers, who strove to introduce order into this chaos, were frustrated by the



counteraction of the patriotic association, of whom their greatest enemies were the chiefs. Tossed here and there at the mercy of the elements, the vessel of the state plunged heavily through the billows, and was indebted for salvation to the force of events, rather than to the skill of her pilots and the efforts of her mutinous crew. At Ghent the misguided populace not only devastated the factories whence they drew their diurnal subsistence, but exercised acts of personal outrage upon respectable citizens, one of whom, a declared partisan of the house of Nassau, had nearly shared the fate of the unhappy Galliard.\* Yet the authorities had the boldness to publish a proclamation palliating this abomination, and openly defied the delegates of government, who were sent down to admonish and supersede them. At Antwerp, Malines, Ypres and Mons, pillage and violence stalked abroad with impunity in open day. At Namur, a body of volunteers, under the command of General Mellinet, whose insubordination had caused so much discontent and embarrassment in Limbourg, attempted a republican movement, but being vigorously attacked by the lancers and civic guards, were overpowered, disarmed, and subsequently disbanded. In short, the whole country, inflamed to a pitch of the wildest excitement, stood reeling on the edge of a precipice. The moment was critical, and admitted of no delay. It was essential for diplomacy to stand forward. Its object was, not so much to save the Belgians from destruction, for they then awakened but little sympathy, as to prevent their involving others in the impending ruin. The only plan that presented itself was to encourage the

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\* The fate of Major Galliard was alluded to in the first volume. This unfortunate officer was seized by the mob on his return to Louvain in October, 1830, and put to death amidst the most excruciating torments.

immediate election of a sovereign, without materially deviating from the stipulations to which the recognition of independence was attached.

Eager to avail himself of every incident calculated to calm the excitement of the Belgic nation, Belliard no sooner received advices of the favourable manner in which the proposition regarding Luxembourg had been received by the Conference, than he transmitted the intelligence to the foreign minister, who communicated it to congress on the 23d. . It was, therefore, with intense anxiety that Mr. Lebeau and his colleagues awaited Lord Ponsonby's return from England, to which epoch they postponed all explanations. More politic, though not less patriotic than their opponents, the ministers were aware that, although congress would never submit to the proposed conditions without some material modification as regarded Luxembourg, the only prospect of consolidating Belgic nationality, was by uniting with the great powers in their endeavours to prevent hostilities. Peace and independence—war and national annihilation, were the synonymous alternatives. In despite, therefore, of menaces, diatribes, insults and personal danger, they boldly adopted the former, and thus saved themselves and Europe.

It was in the midst of a diplomatic banquet given by Count Felix de Mérode on the 26th of May, that Lord Ponsonby's return was announced. Hastening to the abode of the foreign minister, his lordship passed several hours in developing the results of his mission, and in urging Mr. Lebeau to exert his utmost powers to overcome the scruples of the chambers, encouraging him the while with assurances that the selection of Prince Leopold had met with the approbation of all the powers; that little doubt was entertained of his royal highness accepting the proffered throne, under certain con-

ditions, dependent on the prudence of the Belgians and the moderation of the Conference; and finally, that if the government consented to adhere to the basis of separation, there was every prospect of their obtaining the whole, or a part of Luxembourg, but that a refusal would lead to the inevitable rupture of all negotiations, and that any act of aggression would be followed by reprisals.

Although Lord Ponsonby had no objection to the publication of the substance of this *private* conversation, it was his desire to avoid putting his pen to paper. But Mr. Lebeau, harassed and assailed on all sides by the opposition and press, had unfortunately pledged himself to the production of some satisfactory document. He, therefore, induced Lord Ponsonby to embody his observations in a note, that might be laid before Congress. Being persuaded that the existence of Lebeau's ministry depended upon his consent, and that its overthrow would be the signal for the triumph of opinions essentially adverse to the real interests of Belgium, and dangerous to the maintenance of peace, Lord Ponsonby at length complied, and retiring to his hotel, rapidly composed the celebrated letter which caused so much excitement in the political world, and produced the strongest protestations from the Netherlands cabinet. Although this document spoke the undoubted sense of the Conference, and was in perfect accord with the views of the powers, being founded on memorandums taken at the moment of Lord Ponsonby's consultation with the plenipotentiaries, yet being private and unauthenticated by them, it was of course disavowed. But, independent of its containing political definitions of the highest order, definitions in perfect keeping with the spirit of the protocols, it was the undoubted means of opening the eyes of the Belgic people, and of producing a return to

greater moderation in the many, however it may have excited the choler of the few. It was one of those irregular, yet skilful strokes which, whether in war or diplomacy, are often productive of important results. It was necessary, however, to have been upon the spot—to have watched the progress of opinions—to have witnessed the boiling effervescence and reckless indifference to reason that pervaded almost all classes, to be enabled to judge of the efficacy of this step. Moments were then more pregnant with events than months in ordinary times, and trifles of greater influence than the most important occurrences in other days. Although no argument, no sense of danger, could induce the Belgians to adhere to the stipulations, yet the question of compensation being thus thrown forward, it placed the subject in a new light, and most indisputably paved the way to the election of Leopold and the acceptance of the eighteen articles, on which depended that of his royal highness himself.

In the meantime, two notes were put in by the Dutch plenipotentiaries; the one dated the 5th of June, urging the Conference to execute the menaces laid down in the last three protocols; the other, dated the 6th, deprecating in energetic terms all that Lord Ponsonby had advanced relative to Luxembourg, and forcibly disavowing all intention on the part of the king to enter into negotiations for the cession of any part of the grand duchy, “which formed for his majesty and the princes of his house, a substitute for their hereditary possessions, of inestimable value in their eyes.” In reply, the Conference instantly issued the twenty-fifth protocol, accompanied, first, by a letter to the British envoy, requiring him and his colleague to quit Brussels without a moment’s delay; and, secondly, by two notes to the Dutch plenipotentiaries—the one announcing this

resolution, and the other disavowing Lord Ponsonby's "*confidential*" letter, and offering some explanation as to the views of the Conference regarding the grand duchy. Three principles were declared to be the basis of this proposition. First, that all arrangements should be mutual; secondly, that the possession could only be obtained by Belgium by means of a just compensation; and thirdly, that the great powers would not make this proposition formally, until after the adhesion of the Belgians to the basis of separation. The last condition was of itself sufficient to destroy all prospect of the desired adhesion; for the Belgians were too well acquainted with the tenacious character of their former sovereign, and of the immense value he attached to the grand duchy, to think of solemnly consenting to stipulations by which they would have cut themselves off from all prospect of ever obtaining an inch of the disputed territory. They were equally aware that the King of the Netherlands had only adhered to the twelfth protocol and its annexes, because his majesty was satisfied that no bilateral treaty could ever be grounded on conditions that were at variance with the welfare, indeed with the very existence, of one of the parties. The cession once made, all recovery was deemed impossible. The result was a negative answer from Mr. Lebeau. This reply was followed by the presentation of the four last protocols (Nos. 22, 23, 24, and 25); and on the 10th of June, Lord Ponsonby and General Belliard simultaneously quitted Brussels, thereby giving a further proof of the unity and perfect accord existing between their two courts. Here terminated all direct negotiations, and here commenced that diplomatic *hiatus*, which lasted from the 10th of June until the arrival of Sir Robert Adair, on the 9th of August—an *hiatus* that formed one of the most interesting and important periods of that epoch; for it embraced the acceptance of

the eighteen articles, and that of King Leopold, with the arrival and inauguration of his majesty, and the inroad of the Dutch army.

While the anarchists and their foreign coadjutors loudly rejoiced at the prospect of confusion and war, Mr. Lebeau and all moderate men witnessed the departure of the two envoys with deep regret. Belliard, on the arrival of the king, was re-appointed, and remained until he terminated his valuable life, early in the ensuing year; but Lord Ponsonby being called to higher employment, was deprived of the satisfaction of returning to co-operate in the consolidation of a throne, which, in some measure, owed its foundation to his exertions. Belgium lost in him a sincere and enlightened advocate. The sum of her gratitude is not the measure by which to calculate the services of Lord Ponsonby.

The Belgians were now abandoned to themselves; for although Mr. White, who had been employed on several occasions, continued to reside at Brussels, he had no official character. Indeed, so strictly did the British cabinet adhere to its resolution of breaking off all communication, that no direct interchange of correspondence took place between them and Mr. White, who acted solely upon his own responsibility.

Having thus brought down the general state of affairs to the end of the first period of the negotiations, it is necessary, for greater perspicuity, to retrace our steps, in order to explain the whole progress of the different incidents attending the selection and election of Prince Leopold.

The exalted moral character, liberal principles, tolerance and prudence of that prince, not less than his acknowledged talents, courage and connexion with the British royal family, had brought him to the notice of many eminent Belgians at an early stage of the revolu-

tion, as a most suitable person to fill the projected throne. But the internal state of France, and the attachment of the great powers to the Prince of Orange, forbade any of those to whom the prince's name was mentioned from lending a favourable ear to the project. It had been mooted by Mr. Van de Weyer and others, in November, 1830 ; but it was then met by a decided negative, and was consequently abandoned, until the refusal of the Duke de Nemours, when Prince Leopold's name was again brought forward by the Belgic foreign minister, and instructions given to his agents to sound foreign cabinets upon the subject. It was not, however, until after the accession of Lebeau's ministry, that the question was reproduced in a tangible form.

On the 12th of April, after a consultation with Mr. G. de Jonghe, H. Villain XIV., and other members of congress, a renewed communication on the subject was privately made by Mr. White to Sir Edward Cust, one of Prince Leopold's equerries ; for Lord Ponsonby declined being the vehicle of any direct communication until he had submitted the matter to his own government, and received their instructions. In order to avoid exciting the jealousy of other powers, the latter determined to decline all positive interposition at home or abroad ; and, although no doubt existed of their earnest wish to support a combination, on which depended the maintenance of peace, their instructions were by no means precise or imperative. From this moment, however, the negotiations proceeded more rapidly, and although Prince Leopold strictly abstained from giving any authority to the exertions that were being made in his favour, and on no occasion wrote, or allowed a single word to be written in his name on the subject, he was well informed of all that was passing, and was convinced, long ere his election,

that an immense majority of deputies would vote in his favour, and that he would have the full assistance of the clergy and high Catholic laity. His principal opponents were confined to the French and movement party, and a few Orangists, who still retained their seats in congress. In the meantime, Lord Ponsonby being left at liberty to act as he judged expedient, warmly entered into the spirit of the combination, and gave his support to Mr. Lebeau with zeal and candour. In this he was cordially aided by General Belliard.

Belgium having no representative in London, it was deemed advisable to dispatch a deputation of four members, to negotiate directly with Prince Leopold, and, if possible, to obtain from his royal highness some positive declaration that might guide the conduct of the government.\* The mystifications that had been practised upon them in the case of the Duke of Nemours, rendered this precaution the more necessary. This deputation arrived in London on the 20th, and, after a preparatory conversation with Baron Stockmar, the enlightened and tried friend of Prince Leopold, they were admitted to an audience of his royal highness on the 22d. After exposing the object of their mission, and explaining the conditions on which they were authorized to offer the crown—conditions inseparable from the preservation of the territorial integrity—they entered into other details connected with local matters, and then awaited the prince's reply. Among various observations that fell from his royal highness on this occasion, none are more deserving of record than the passage

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\* Mr. Jules van Praet, who had accompanied the first Belgic mission to England, remained in London, but without any official character. This distinguished publicist was subsequently appointed private secretary to King Leopold.



quoted by Mr. Nothomb. It is tempered by a noble simplicity and frankness that shews the elevated sentiments of the speaker, and his just appreciation of the true condition of Belgium. "All my ambition," said he, "is to contribute to the welfare of my fellow-creatures. When yet young, I have found myself in so many difficult and singular situations, that I have learned to consider power only with a philosophic eye. I never coveted it but for the sake of doing good—durable good. Had not certain political difficulties arisen, which appeared to me essentially opposed to the independence of Greece, I should now be in that country; and yet I never attempted to conceal from myself the difficulties of my position. I am aware how desirable it is that Belgium should have a sovereign as soon as possible. The peace of Europe is interested in it."

However flattering and tempting might have been the propositions of the deputation—however gratifying to the prince's private feelings, motives of high policy and sound reason at first presented a series of embarrassments and obstacles to his acceptance, and had well nigh produced a refusal. These objections were founded on the peculiar situation in which the Belgians were placed, in regard to the great powers, and the Germanic confederation. On the one side, the Conference required the adhesion of Belgium to the unconditional abandonment of Luxembourg; to which Prince Leopold could not assent without proposing to violate the 1st and 8th articles of the Belgic constitution, and thus destroying all prospect of his elevation. On the other, the Belgians insisted on their sovereign's unequivocal adherence to the constitutional oath, which, from its guaranteeing the territorial integrity, Luxembourg included, would have been tantamount to a direct declaration of hostilities, and would have exposed the sovereign *ab initio*

to all the risks of war, to avert which was the principal—the only inducement with some of the powers to support his nomination. To sacrifice the happy tranquillity and dignified enjoyments of Claremont, together with all the noble prospects and political advantages attendant on its illustrious owner's position in Great Britain, for the Belgic throne, even under its most brilliant aspect, was a matter of doubt and hazard, and required the deepest and most mature consideration. But to renounce all the splendid concomitants of such a situation, merely to place himself at the head of a disorganized nation, that were generally regarded as political *parias*, for the mere glory of springing first into the gulph, would have been an act of the most extravagant imprudence.

A modification of the exigencies of appellants and arbitrators was, therefore, the essential preliminary to acceptance. It was this flagrant necessity, or rather the imminent danger to the repose of Europe likely to arise from a prolongation of the state of affairs in Belgium, that operated upon the great powers, and thus eventually led to the 18 articles. The Belgians, mistaking the real cause of this change, attributed it to a dread of their own prowess. It is true it did proceed from dread, but it was the fear inspired, not by the courage of an excited man, but by his loss of self-command. The Dutch, on the other hand, exclaimed against it as a proof of the subserviency of the British ministers to French influence, to the preponderance of democratic principles in the government, to a flagrant partiality for the Belgians, and to a desire to insure the election of Prince Leopold, and thus to be able to convert Belgium into a British province. Although this accusation is too absurd to merit refutation, yet it may be proper to mention that the election of King Leopold was known to the Conference before the recall of Lord Pon-

sonby, and that up to that time no change had taken place in the undoubted bias of the great powers towards the Dutch monarch. A modification of this tendency did, however, then take place, and then arose a remarkable interchange of conduct between the Dutch and the Belgians. The former, who had hitherto evinced an eager anxiety to press the Conference to intervene by force of arms, now declined the competency of their arbitration; while the latter, who had previously rejected all interference, now as loudly called for absolute intervention.

What the Belgians required was, not an adventurous chief to rally and lead them on to battle, but a prudent sovereign, who might cast the halo of his name around their discredited revolution, and reconcile it and their country with the rest of Europe. However blind the turbulent mass might have been to their own real interests, the men at the head of the government were well convinced that their only prospect of admission into the great European family, must be under the shadow of the olive branch, and not beneath the flash of the sword. To draw the latter was equivalent to applying the axe to their young tree of liberty. The politic prince to whom they addressed their vows, was fully alive to this fact, and wisely resolved to decline the throne, unless he were certain of reconciling the independence and welfare of his future kingdom with the general interests of Europe. This could only be effected by concessions on the part of the Conference, and by the withdrawal of incompatible pretensions on that of the Belgians. The favourable manner in which the Conference had listened to Lord Ponsonby's proposition relative to Luxembourg, offered some chance of approximation; but the impediments were not so much on the side of the London plenipotentiaries, who were anxious for peace, as on that of the Belgians, who thirsted for war. The dif-

ficulty was, to induce the latter to listen to concessions of any kind. This desirable object was, however, at length effected. After a most stormy discussion, the eloquence of Lebeau, Le Hon, Nothomb and others, prevailed, and government was authorized to "terminate the territorial contestations by means of pecuniary sacrifices." Mr. Lebeau availed himself of this opening to endeavour to effect various modifications to the basis of September. Two of the ablest of his colleagues, Messrs. Devaux and Nothomb, were dispatched to London, where, after mature deliberation with Prince Leopold, Lord Durham and Baron Stockmar, a note was drawn up and submitted to the Conference. It was this note which immediately led to the compilation of the eighteen articles.

Although the consent of congress to negotiate on the principle of pecuniary indemnity differed essentially from the territorial compensation intended, though not specified by the Conference, it was yet a great step gained; for it prepared the public to contemplate the possibility of concession; it placed the necessity of sacrifices more fully before them; and although the annals of parliamentary discussion never presented scenes of greater confusion and disorder than those that occurred during the debates, the majority plainly demonstrated that they were inclined to a system of pacification. The government and diplomacy thus obtained an opportunity of weighing the strength of the opposition, and of calculating their own chance of success.

In the meantime, the formal proposition for proceeding forthwith to the election of Prince Leopold, signed by ninety-six members, was laid upon the table of the house on the 26th of May, in despite of the efforts of the opposition, the most logical of whom wished to postpone the election of a king until the final adjustment of all territorial contentions, while others demanded a decla-

ration of war against Holland, and others again called for an indigenous sovereign ; the former proposition was carried on the 31st of May, by a majority of 137 to 48 voices, and the time for opening the discussion definitively fixed to the ensuing day. On the afternoon of the 4th of June these debates closed, and His Royal Highness Leopold George Christian Frederick, of Saxe-Cobourg, was proclaimed King of the Belgians, by a majority of 152 out of 196 votes ; under the express proviso, “ that he should accept the constitution, and swear to maintain the national independence and territorial integrity.” Of the minority of 43, 14 voted for Baron Surlet de Chokier, 19 abstained on the ground that the election was premature, and 10 directly opposed, because they considered it tantamount to a recognition of the rejected protocols. The first fraction was composed of the most uncompromising French re-unionists, who selected the regent partly from a knowledge of his devotion to France, and partly as a cloak to conceal other purposes.

Although the British government, and the monarch elect had been in some measure prepared for the issue, Lord Ponsonby deemed it expedient to dispatch a confidential person to communicate this important intelligence to both. The prince, who had left town for Claremont, was, therefore, apprised of the honour conferred on him at an early hour on the 6th. The impression that such an event would otherwise have been calculated to make, was in some measure neutralized by previous anticipation ; but his royal highness, nevertheless, manifested deep emotion on being informed of the various circumstances attending the election, and on being assured that the dissentient votes were political—not personal ; and that the mystification, of which they had lately been the dupe, had rendered the whole congress distrustful, and thus diminished the majority. In con-

formity with the plan adopted in the case of the Duke of Nemours, a deputation, consisting of the president and nine members of congress, proceeded to London, bearing a letter from the regent to Prince Leopold, \*officially announcing the election, and offering him the crown.

The intelligence of an event that was likely to deprive the household at Claremont, and the poor of the neighbouring district, of an indulgent master and benevolent protector, was received with tokens of profound regret. The prince had endeared himself to all around. The tears that had been shed on the demise of the young and beautiful princess, whom it was the will of Providence to tear from the adoration of a mighty nation, were renewed at Esher and its vicinity, at the prospect of losing her illustrious consort. But this departure depended on so many contingent circumstances, that the election may be said to have been the least difficult of all the attendant operations.

Much has been said by the enemies and opponents of this combination, of the artifices and intrigues employed by the British government, their agents, and those of Leopold, to ensure success. Never was an accusation more utterly groundless. It is incontestable on the one hand, that the conduct of the government, and the language of Lord Ponsonby, were straightforward and candid. The latter, obeying his instructions, advocated the prince's cause, with zeal and ability; but neither he, nor any person connected with him, diverged from the general tenor of the protocols. Their arguments had more in them of exhortation, than of persuasion or cajoling, and were based wholly and solely on the territorial arrangements of 1790. Nothing was ever said to induce a single deputy to believe, that the prince would accept the crown, unless the Belgians consented

to moderate their pretensions to the left bank of the Scheldt and Luxembourg, or to circulate an impression that the king grand-duke was disposed to consent to the cession of either the one or the other without a full equivalent. At the same time, no effort was omitted to temper the ardour of the nation, and to convince them that the election of Prince Leopold was the most efficacious, perhaps the only means of their ever obtaining the recognition of their independence. These provisions were fully borne out by subsequent events.

On the other hand, it was impossible to be more strictly passive in the affair than was Prince Leopold. Not a line was written by his royal highness, or by any one in his behalf, until he had become sovereign elect. Not a shilling was expended in gaining over the people; not a single article was inserted in the journals; nor was recourse had to any of the various artifices of songs, busts and portraits, that had been employed on previous occasions by the supporters of other combinations. The selection of Prince Leopold was founded on political and moral grounds of the highest order, and it was carried to maturity without the smallest effort or interference, direct or indirect, on the part of the august personage most interested in the issue. History does not furnish an example of the election of a sovereign, so utterly devoid of all intrigue, or so essentially and unequivocally spontaneous, as that of Leopold. Fortune, who had so often deviated from her path to cast her richest gifts before him, again stepped forward bearing still more brilliant honours. The diadem arose before him unbidden and unsought for; not such a one as that of half-savage Greece, but one that might excite the envy of the mightiest potentate. Too prudent, however, to grasp the tempting jewel, he paused; and by this caution increased his claims to the respect of his future

people, and to that of Europe in general. Nay, so little did he court power, that he would have preferred the tranquil joys of Claremont to the glories of the proffered throne, had he not been persuaded that his refusal would be the signal for general war.

Nothing, in fact, could more distinctly prove the critical situation of Europe, than the eagerness with which the northern powers urged Prince Leopold to consent. Nothing can more plainly demonstrate the embarrassment and insincerity of Russia, than the conduct of her plenipotentiary in London. Dreading the bursting forth of that war which she had recently intended to kindle throughout Europe, no assurances of support and recognition were spared in order to press the prince's acceptance *per fas et nefas*, and this with the distinct foreknowledge that the Czar's promises were mere diplomatic artifices, that his object was to gain time, and that if he succeeded in overwhelming Poland, there was not the slightest intention on his part to realize the amicable professions so lavishly poured out by Prince Lieven and Count Mastuzewiz. In fact, scarcely had the groans of expiring Poland reached the imperial ear, ere the mask was thrown off, and the real nature of the autocrat's policy became manifest.

While the Belgic commissioners and deputation were zealously endeavouring to remove some of the difficulties that were opposed to the prince's acceptance, the movement party at Brussels were doing all in their power to frustrate this desirable consummation. The departure of Lord Ponsonby and his colleague, instead of producing intimidation, appeared to add fuel to the flame of irritation and irreflexion. This irritation was further augmented by the surreptitious publication of the memorandum of the 29th of May, which Lord Ponsonby had deemed it expedient to withhold; not only from a



conviction that it would produce no good effect, but from a desire to spare the Conference the insult of restitution. Indeed, the inutility and danger of presenting the last four protocols, at a period when it was necessary to employ conciliation, had been so evident, that the Dutch cabinet artfully availed themselves of the moment, and despatched copies to Brussels, which being placed in the hands of their partisans were communicated to Congress during the sitting of the 2d of June. The effect produced was precisely that which had been anticipated by Lord Ponsonby. A universal cry for war, as the only mode of terminating the territorial question, burst forth from the press and public. Congress, actuated by the same spirit, fixed the 30th of June as the last day of negotiation.

Whatever might have been the sentiments of the regent, who secretly coincided with the movement party, those of his ministers were essentially pacific. But their situation was precarious, and their influence inconsiderable. Persecuted and harassed on every side; deprived of the support and experienced advice of the two foreign envoys, it required the utmost tact and firmness to resist the efforts of the various parties that were struggling to overthrow them, with the view of substituting a system of action and violence for that of moderation and negotiation, which could alone lead to a favourable issue. The great object, therefore, was to assist the ministry in stemming the torrent of popular feeling—to induce all the deputies that had voted for Prince Leopold to continue their support; and, lastly, to prepare their minds for the modifications that were in progress of arrangement in London.

To effect this, it was necessary to employ no trifling activity, and some address. It was requisite to abandon all ordinary routine; to carry on a species of guerilla

tactics ; to exchange the mysteries and reserve of the closet for the hardy declarations of the open square ; to adopt language suited to the men and the situation ; to watch the feelings of the people ; now to cajole, now to threaten, and often to assume a responsibility not borne out by authority. It was necessary to encourage some, to rally others, and, in short, to adopt a system that would in other times be looked on as an utter derogation from the ordinary walks of diplomacy. This was rendered somewhat more easy from the situation in which the person acting in this business found himself after the departure of Lord Ponsonby. For, although he had no official mission, and lost no opportunity of impressing this upon the minds of the public, yet this was looked upon as a mere diplomatic artifice, and due credit was given to his assurances by many deputies, over whom he obtained an influence that was highly beneficial at the critical juncture of the eighteen articles. These efforts, and those of Mr. Sole, secretary to General Belliard, who had been directed to return from Paris to Brussels, were unexpectedly and powerfully aided by the arrival of the Polish agent, Count Ramon Zaluski. Calculating that the consolidation and recognition of Belgic independence would operate favourably on the conduct of the great powers towards his own country, Zaluski zealously exerted himself in preaching reason and moderation, and often succeeded in making an impression on those who had shown indifference to all other remonstrances.

At length the important period arrived that was to decide the acceptance or rejection of Leopold, or in other words, the great question of peace or war. The deputation having returned to Brussels on the 27th, the president publicly announced to Congress the issue of their mission. After communicating the prince's reply, containing his conditional acceptance, Mr. de Gerlache read

his royal highness's letter to the regent, in which, after dwelling upon his own efforts to co-operate in bringing the negotiations to a happy end, Leopold added, that "as soon as congress should adopt the articles proposed by the Conference, he should consider all difficulties as set aside, and be prepared to proceed immediately to Brussels."\* Thus making his definitive acceptance dependent upon the adhesion of Belgium to the treaty of the eighteen articles, the compilation of which had occupied the Conference during the preceding ten days.† This celebrated act must not be passed over without a few observations, relative to its origin, and its divergency from the twelfth protocol, to which the Dutch had adhered as the sole basis of negotiation.

"The Conference," as observed by Mr. Nothomb, "in fixing the basis of separation, having adopted the principle of equity, that, 'upon a dissolution of partnership, each party shall resume possession of the portion originally belonging to himself,' its next object was to ascertain and define the respective property of each before their union." It was decided, therefore, that Holland, which had re-established her independence in 1813, should be re-constituted as she was in 1790; whilst Belgium, having no other immediate antecedents than those she derived from the Austrian Netherlands, was to be formed of all the rest of the Netherlands kingdom, as limited by the treaty of Vienna, including Liege, Philippeville, Bouillon, and Mariembourg, but excepting the grand duchy, which was declared to belong to the Nassau family and the Germanic Confederation. By this latter clause, the negotiation was rendered more complex; for the Belgo-Luxembourg was confounded with the Belgo-Dutch question, which ought to have

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\* See Appendix, Nos. 31 and 32.

† See Appendix, No. 33.

been kept totally distinct. For it is evident, that while the Belgians were vitally concerned in the retention of this contiguous province, the Dutch people could have no more interest in it, either in a military or financial point of view, than the English in the preservation of Hanover. It was, therefore, a question between Belgium and the House of Nassau, and not between the former and the subjects of the latter. It was consequently suggested by the Belgic commissioners, in the note before alluded to, that it would be advisable to separate the Luxembourg question from the rest, to maintain the *statu quo* in that province, and that this *statu quo* should be no bar to the recognition of their king. This important suggestion led to the modification of the second article of the basis, and to the insertion of the third of the projected preliminaries.

The Belgians had laid claim to the left bank of the Scheldt; and certainly both nature and policy pointed out the importance and even justice of its appertaining to Belgium, from which it had been separated in 1648.\* But although it had been united to France by the treaty of the Hague in 1795, the acts of France during the war were declared void, and Holland resumed possession in 1814. This pretension, mainly founded on French conquest, was considered untenable, both according to the *jus postliminii* of 1790, and that of actual possession. It was, therefore, prudently abandoned by the Belgians, who however obtained a stipulation (Art. 17), guaranteeing the free use of the Terneuse canal, and the adoption of effective measures to secure the Flanders from inundation by a regular discharge of the internal waters.

On minutely scrutinizing the basis of separation established in favour of Holland, on the principle of the

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\* Treaty of Munster.

*postliminii* of 1790, the Belgians imagined they had discovered two or three important circumstances relative to the enclaves in Limbourg, that might be converted to their advantage.\* For, whilst they admitted the right of Holland to Venloo, the half of Maestricht and the fifty-three villages, known as the *pays de la generalité*, of which latter thirteen were on the left, and forty-one on the right bank of the Meuse, with a population of 59,000 souls, they themselves advanced certain counter-claims. These were, 1st, to the half sovereignty of Maestricht and Bergen-op-Zoom; the first in right of the Prince-Bishop of Liege, and the second in that of the Elector Palatine; 2d, to the small towns of Huysen, Malberg, and Sevenaer, in Guelder-land, formerly belonging to the duchy of Cleves; 3d, to the villages of Æffelt and Boxmeer, Helverinbeek, and others in North Brabant; together with the county of Meghen and Gemert, an ancient commandery of the Teutonic order. By a subtle sophism the Belgians founded their claims on the text of the first article of the basis, by which they argued that Holland was only entitled to such territory as actually belonged to her in 1790, and consequently that all such portions as did not own her sway at that period must fall to their share. "It is the business of the Dutch," said they, "to prove what they did possess—ours to show what they did not. Their proofs are affirmative, ours negative." Though extremely specious, nothing could be more ill-founded than this pretension. For although it might be proved that the enclaves in question did not belong to Holland, there was nothing to shew them to be the pro-

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\* The word *enclave*, having no immediate equivalent in English, has been adopted in the maps of the Conference. Its literal meaning is an isolated or detached portion of territory completely surrounded or enclosed by another. Instances of this still exist in England, as, for instance, a patch of Wiltshire is enclosed in Berkshire, &c.

perty of Belgium. Some discussion might certainly have arisen as to the moiety of Maestricht, in right of the representatives of the Prince Bishops of Liege, though the Dutch exclusively garrisoned that fortress in 1790; but if the other enclaves were to be separated from Holland, the heirs of the original proprietors were the lawful claimants. It might have been equally reasonable to argue, that if West Friesland had not belonged to Holland in 1790, the first article of the basis intended it to fall to the share of Belgium. The claim was, however, admitted by the Conference, and gave rise to the fourth and fifth articles of the new treaty.

The next modification of importance was that of the debt, which it had been proposed to divide between the two countries in the proportion of sixteen to fifteen, the larger division appertaining to Belgium. In lieu of this most inequitable distribution, the twelfth article declared that each state should assume the responsibility of its original debts before, and equally divide those contracted during their union. Such were the principal features of the new preliminaries, in which the deviations from the original basis of separation were so remarkable, as to afford strong grounds for anticipating their acceptance by Congress—the *sine quâ non* now attached to that of Prince Leopold.

The discussion of these articles, which were communicated to the chambers on the 28th of June, was fixed for the 1st of July. In the meantime every effort was made, in and out of doors, to throw disfavour on the ministry, and to excite popular prejudice against the preliminaries. They were declared to be a mere summary of the hated protocols, artfully disguised. The press fulminated the most violent articles against them, and the opposition and patriotic association placed no bounds to their expressions of discontent. Thirty-nine deputies,

the most active of the extreme opposition, drew up a violent protestation to congress, the galleries of which were constantly filled with individuals, whose vociferous clamours often portended a renewal of the worst scenes of the convention. Placards were distributed, anonymous threats were addressed to the supporters of the propositions, and the walls were scored with inflammatory appeals. The ministers were assailed with gross diatribes, and in more than one instance subjected to personal insults, from the emissaries of the propaganda, or others, whose mission it was to promote anarchy. Irresolution and tumult reigned within the chambers, riot and distrust without ; plots and conspiracies were actively carried on ; Orangists and republicans made their last death struggle. Amongst others, General Hardi de Beaulieu, who was said to cloak the most ambitious projects beneath a veil of extreme liberalism, availed himself of this desperate state of affairs to attempt a republican movement ; but the government, or rather the good sense of the people, prevailed ; and the general, with the few adventurers who had followed him from Grammont and other provincial towns, were met and dispersed without bloodshed.

That the secret vows of the majority leaned towards the acceptance of the preliminaries, was not doubtful ; but such was the dread of popular odium, so great the intimidation under which they laboured, that when the hour for discussion arrived, they were inclined to shrink from the task, and during some time no one had sufficient courage to propose the obnoxious preliminaries. At length Mr. Van Snick of Mons, rose, and boldly exclaimed, "it has been asked, who among the deputies would dare to assume the moral responsibility of proposing to adopt the 18 articles. Sirs, I am that deputy, and in so doing, I conceive that I am performing a good

action.”\* A seconder having immediately presented himself, the proposition was read by the president ; and after the rejection of sundry amendments, the chamber decided on proceeding to the general discussion.

To follow the nine days' debates that ensued, would be to retrace scenes of disorder and uproar never exceeded in any legislative assembly. Every word tending to produce war ; every sentiment of an exaggerated character, was hailed with acclamatory thunders, no matter how inconsistent with reason and policy, no matter how replete with extravagant bombast ; while groans, hisses, and the most appalling yells, invariably overwhelmed the voices of those whose language was tempered with moderation, or who had courage to expose the perils by which they were environed. The two parties presented a striking contrast. On the one side, the opposition, active, bold, and passionately eloquent, backed by the applause of the galleries, held firmly together, with an air of preconcerted arrangement. On the other, the friends of peace, languid and discouraged, had scarce sufficient energy to avow their opinions, and neglected all ordinary parliamentary tactics, or efforts to rally and encourage each other by preparatory meetings and the adoption of a settled system. It was not without difficulty that they could be finally persuaded to assemble at the house of Baron Coppin, the civil governor, in order to marshal their forces, and to prepare a uniform plan of action.

The great difficulty was to sustain their resolution, by impressing upon them a conviction that the preliminaries were not a new diplomatic deception, and that the arrival of the king would be the instant and indubitable result of their acceptance. Notwithstanding

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\* This courageous deputy fell a victim to the cholera in 1834, at Ghent, where he was appointed to high judicial functions.



this, their courage had nearly forsaken them towards the close of the second day. And truly the scene that occurred was enough to shake the nerves of firmer and more experienced men than the majority of the national representatives. The excitement which had prevailed during the previous fortnight, and which appeared to be gradually drawing to a crisis, at length broke forth into an open storm. "Away with the protocols! War! Death to the ministers! To the lantern with the majority!" resounded in tremendous echoes from the galleries. The president vainly sought to allay the tempest, and the civic guards no less vainly endeavoured to expel the rioters, who threatened to spring into the body of the house, and to reek their vengeance upon the supporters of the measure; some of whom sat in pale and mournful resignation; while others, abandoning their places, rushed in a state of indescribable consternation into the adjoining committee-room. It was at this juncture, that Mr. Van de Weyer bethought himself of a stratagem that indisputably stemmed the current of frenzy and demoralization, and gave time for reflection. After a few moments' conversation with some of his party, he flew to the tribune and proposed the following amendment:—"1st, the enclaves in Holland acknowledged to belong to Belgium by the 2nd article of the preliminaries, shall be received as an equivalent for Venloo and the right of Holland to a part of Maastricht. Until the final conclusion of the arrangement, no part of the territory shall be given up; 2nd, the *statu quo* of Luxembourg shall be maintained, under the guarantee of the great powers, until the termination of the negotiation for an indemnity."

Doubtless, had it been Mr. Van de Weyer's intention to push this amendment to a division, or even to have proceeded to its immediate development; and had the

opposition instantly turned round and supported it, in conjunction with a few of the most timid of the majority, its effects would have gone far to neutralize the acceptance of the rest. But this was not the mover's object; he saw the demoralized state of a large portion of his colleagues, and was convinced that all would be lost unless some intermediary measure was put forward as a rallying point. He, therefore, threw in the amendment as the only means of obtaining a few hours' respite, and thus arresting the prevailing panic. The policy of this measure has been severely criticised, but impartial persons who witnessed the scene, and were fully aware of the critical state of the question, were inclined to regard Mr. Van de Weyer's amendment as one of the principal accessaries to ultimate success.

The most remarkable incident of this long and stormy discussion was the celebrated speech of Mr. Lebeau. Never was the triumph of eloquence and talent over sophism and declamation more powerfully demonstrated. To the most conclusive reasoning and enlightened political argument, the orator added a fluency and purity of diction not unworthy of the best days of the English Commons. The effect was almost magical—the hitherto turbulent galleries were lulled and fascinated—the whole house listened with profound attention, and if the minister was interrupted, it was only by gratulatory plaudits. To analyze this remarkable speech would be nearly as difficult as to depict the sensation it produced in the assembly. The last passage must not, however, be omitted:—"I adjure the deputies who this day hear me," said Mr. Lebeau, "to offer an example of union! If the preliminaries be rejected, I will still endeavour to serve my country within these walls, and will cordially stretch out my hand to support those who have opposed me. But you must admit that if

they be accepted, we shall be entitled to say to you, if you do not wish to give an example of anarchy to the nation; if you would not draw down incalculable mischiefs on the country—unite unhesitatingly with us! Come, let us all support the King of the Belgians! The nation has pronounced—there is no longer any division among us. We are all brethren—we have no other object than the honour and happiness of our country.”

No sooner had Mr. Lebeau terminated, than universal thunders of applause burst forth from all corners of the chambers. The men shouted, the women waved their handkerchiefs, and the deputies, even the bitterest foes of the ministers, hastened to the foot of the tribune to congratulate him; many even wept from emotion. Exhausted by his exertions, and deeply affected by these marks of sympathy and admiration, Lebeau hastily withdrew to the foreign-office, and the house broke up. For no one had patience to listen, nor indeed had any one courage to mount the rostrum while the assembly was still palpitating with the vivid impressions of the previous speech. Such a moment of unalloyed and grateful triumph rarely falls to the lot of statesmen, and must have consoled Lebeau for the many hours of anxious bitterness, for the many insults he had previously endured.

From this hour the debates were divested of all interest. It was evident that, unless some fatal accident intervened, the cause was gained. At length a division was demanded, and on the 9th of July, Mr. Van Snick's proposition was carried by a majority of 126 to 70 votes. By one of those caprices which so often mark the fickleness of public opinion, the loudest acclamations hailed the announcement. The agitators vanished, the opposition shrunk back, the press became more moderate, the capital was overjoyed, and general satisfaction was

diffused throughout the provinces. For the first time since the outbreaking of the revolution, a vista of tranquillity and independence opened before them. Inasmuch as Lebeau had heretofore been the object of public sarcasm and vituperation, so did he now become the idol of popular incense. He was complimented, serenaded, and lauded to the skies, as a mirror of eloquence and the saviour of his country. He could not obtain this triumph however, without attracting the undying hatred of the republican, Orange and French party ; for he thereby tore down the black banner of discord, and grafted the olive-branch upon the tree of liberty. The successful issue of the measures he advocated placed an insuperable barrier to a republic, to restoration, or re-union. True to their professions, no sooner had he secured a sovereign to their country, than he and his friend and colleague, Mr. Devaux, resigned office, and retired into private life, without carrying with them a single shilling of the public money.

The decision of congress was instantly followed by the selection of a deputation of five members, who were directed to proceed with all speed to communicate the result to Prince Leopold. These gentlemen, among whom was the ex-minister himself, started on the 10th, and on the 14th, official information reached Brussels, which placed the immediate arrival of his royal highness beyond a doubt. Faithful to his promise, the prince bade adieu to Marlborough-house on the 16th, and leaving behind him the whole of his British establishment, with the exception of one aid-de-camp (Sir H. Seton), and a few domestics, reached Ostend on the 17th. In despite of the advice of some timid counsellors, who feared lest Leopold's passage through Ghent, should be the pretext for Orange demonstrations, he proceeded to that city, where he slept on the 18th, and on the following evening reached Laeken amidst the glare of a thousand

torches, the shouts and acclamations of the multitude, and the roaring of artillery. His progress from the frontier had been one uninterrupted scene of festivity. Every thing being prepared for the ceremony of inauguration, the monarch elect left Laeken soon after mid-day, on the 21st, and entering the city on horseback, proceeded amidst the ringing of bells, the hurrahs of the people, the waving of banners, garlands, and characteristic devices, to the Place Royale. Here, upon an elevated platform, splendidly decorated with national and royal emblems, Leopold was received by the regent, the members of congress, and the various constituted authorities; while dense masses of the people filled the square, the windows, and the house-tops, rending the air with joyful acclamations. The whole together formed an animating and splendid spectacle. After a short pause, the regent addressed the royal stranger in an impressive speech, and terminated by resigning his authority into the hands of congress.\* The prince then rose, and replied in brief but impressive language; and the constitution having been read aloud by one of the attendant secretaries, a salute of a hundred and one guns announced that the prescribed oaths had been taken and that Leopold was inaugurated king. This ceremony being ended, the monarch descended from his throne and proceeded on foot to the palace, escorted by the whole of the authorities. Having appeared for a while at the balcony, his majesty retired a few minutes to recover from the many emotions that agitated his heart, and then returned to give his first public audience. The reputation for prudence and valour that

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\* A decree of congress of the preceding evening declared that the regent had deserved well of his country; that a medal should be struck to commemorate his administration, and that he should enjoy a pension of 10,000 florins annually.

preceded him was by no means diminished on witnessing his noble carriage, his dignified manners, and the firm yet benevolent expression of his fine features. Banquets, illuminations, and other manifestations of rejoicing terminated this memorable day, which secured to Belgium her first exclusive sovereign, and raised her to an independent grade in the great family of European nations.

The mission of congress being now at an end, they adjourned indefinitely, and the necessary instructions were issued for the election of their constitutional substitutes, under the denomination of "the Senate," and "Chamber of Representatives."\* On the 24th a royal decree announced the recomposition of the ministry; and on the 28th the king left Brussels with the intention of visiting Antwerp, Liege, and other parts of his new kingdom.† The manner in which he was everywhere received promised a durable popularity. Of the various personages who pressed forward to greet their new ruler, none were more conspicuous than the clergy. Bishops and priests were unanimous in the warmth and sincerity of their congratulations; and, certes, none have been more consistently loyal than this body.

\* The senate consists of fifty members. The conditions of eligibility are, that a candidate must have attained his fortieth year, and pay 1,000 florins direct taxes. The election is for eight years, renewed by halves every four years. The second chamber consists of 101 members, in the proportion of 1 for 40,000 inhabitants. The conditions are the payment of 100 florins direct taxes, and being twenty-five years of age. The members of the second chamber receive a monthly salary of 200 florins during the session. They are renewed by halves every two years.

† Ministry of the 24th of July, 1831:—

Foreign affairs .....	Mr. De Muelenaere.
Home .....	Mr. Sauvage.
Justice.....	Mr. Raikem.
War.....	Mr. De Faily.
Finance .....	Mr. Cogen.

## CHAPTER IX.

BARON DE WESSENBERG'S MISSION TO THE HAGUE—THE DUTCH REGRET THE EIGHTEEN ARTICLES—NOTES OF THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES—THE DUTCH MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR INVADING BELGIUM—DISPOSITION OF THEIR FORCE—THEY ADVANCE—PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN—DISPOSITION OF THE BELGIAN ARMY—CHASSE RESUMES HOSTILITIES—DAINE DEFEATED AT HASSELT—KING LEOPOLD RETIRES FROM AERSCHOT TO LOUVAIN, WHERE HIS ARMY IS ROUTED—THE FRENCH ARMY OF THE NORTH INTERVENES—SIR R. ADAIR ARRIVES—CAPITULATION OF LOUVAIN—THE DUTCH RETIRE—CONVENTION BETWEEN THE PRINCE OF ORANGE AND MARSHAL GERARD—THE FRENCH TROOPS WITHDRAWN—DUKE OF SAXE WEIMAR—LORD WILLIAM RUSSELL—CONFUSION AT BRUSSELS—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS UPON THE EXPEDITION.

IN the meantime the gathering tempest was preparing in Holland. These fêtes and rejoicings were soon destined to be converted into lamentations and mourning; and the triumphal march of the monarch into a painful and unexpected discomfiture. Confident in the virtue of treaties, and the solemnity of an armistice guaranteed by the Conference, the Belgians abandoned themselves to a fatal security, from which they were about to be roused by a blow that mortally wounded their national pride, and endangered their infant nationality.

It is necessary to return to an earlier epoch, in order to explain the causes which immediately led to the events of August. Influenced by a dread of general war, but not by the slightest yearning towards the Belgians, the Conference had adopted the modified preliminaries, and spared no efforts to induce Prince Leopold to exchange the ease and enjoyment of his brilliant existence in England for the cares and hazards of a re-

volutionary throne. Bending to the force of circumstances, the five powers had reluctantly sacrificed the claims of legitimacy to those of insurrection: whilst Prince Leopold, influenced more by the noble desire of co-operating in the maintenance of peace than by motives of ambition, generously cast himself into the yawning chasm, and devoted himself to the general good.

The Conference having strong grounds to assume that the eighteen articles might be carried in Belgium, it was of the utmost importance to render this adhesion bilateral, by exerting every means to overcome the sturdy tenacity of the Netherlands cabinet; for up to the latest moment the Dutch plenipotentiaries had insisted on the maintenance of the basis of separation, according to the letter of the twelfth protocol, as the *sine quâ non* of all farther negotiation. Nor had they paused there, but had hinted at the renewal of hostilities. On the 22d of June, a note was addressed by them, calling energetically on the Conference to execute the engagements consigned in its former acts, and declaring that if they refused, "no alternative would remain for the king but to have recourse to his own measures, and to put an end to condescensions that were no longer compatible with the internal or external safety of his kingdom, nor with the interests of his faithful subjects, already so gravely compromised, and whose absolute ruin would be the result of a prolongation of the existing crisis."\*

With a view of rendering the mediation of the great powers more effective, instructions were forwarded to the various diplomatic agents at the Hague, to press the subject with all the weight and influence of their re-

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\* "Recueil des Pièces Diplomatiques." The Hague, 1831.



spective courts ; and it was resolved that the Baron de Wessenberg, the Austrian plenipotentiary, should proceed to that capital, "in order to bring the eighteen articles to the knowledge of the King of the Netherlands, and afford any explanation that might be deemed necessary."\* Baron de Wessenberg was likewise the bearer of a letter to the Dutch foreign minister, signed by the members of the Conference, in which, after expatiating upon the difficulties and embarrassments that had led to the new preliminaries, hopes were expressed, "that the king in his wisdom, equity, and amity for the powers, would not refuse to weigh these considerations, the only object of which was to conciliate, as much as possible, his rights and interests with the maintenance of general peace."

But every effort proved abortive. Neither the fear of entailing that frightful scourge which all Europe was anxious to avert, nor that of prolonging a crisis said to be so pregnant with evil to Holland, could shake the unalterable firmness of the king. A despatch to this effect was addressed by Baron Verstolk to the Conference, on the 12th of July, which declared, "that the new preliminaries deviated so materially from the twelfth protocol, as to render their acceptance inadmissible ; that the possession of the grand-duchy was of vital importance, not only to the house of Nassau, but to Holland, whose military position it efficaciously guaranteed ; that the proposed *statu quo* was one of the positive grievances of which the king had long reclaimed the redress ; that as to any exchange, admitting its possibility, this was the exclusive competency of the king and the German Confederation ; that if any doubt should arise as to the entire right of Holland to Maestricht in 1790,

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\* Protocol, No. 27, 26th of June.

the Belgians were no more entitled to any portion of the ancient bishopric of Liege than the Dutch; that they had no enclaves in Holland, and, therefore, could make no exchanges; that the clause stipulating the immediate and reciprocal evacuation of territory, would deprive Holland of its principal guarantee for security, and for the execution of the proposed conditions; and that it was contrary to the dignity of the king and the independence of his people, to listen for a moment to the seventh article concerning the internal navigation between the Scheldt and the Rhine." Similar objections were made to the twelfth and thirteenth sections, relating to the debt, without, however, contesting their equity. This document then proceeded to criticise the vagueness and dangerous want of precision that pervaded several essential clauses. It stigmatized the whole as calculated to impede, rather than promote, a solution, and as evidently got up, in collusion with the Belgic commissioners, against the interests and honour of Holland. It terminated by declaring that, "if the prince who might be called to the Belgic sovereignty should accept and take possession without having previously adhered to the arrangements consigned in the twelfth protocol, his majesty could only consider him as placed thereby in a hostile attitude towards himself, and as his avowed enemy."

The reception of this manifest, combined with the previous declarations and actual preparations in Holland, ought to have left little doubt as to the aggressive intentions of the Dutch, and was calculated to produce hesitation in the mind of Leopold; but relying on the protestations of the powers, and having pledged his word, he bid defiance to difficulties that might have deterred a less determined mind. This manifest was replied to by the Conference on the 25th of July. Dis-

regarding or misunderstanding the king's declarations, (a circumstance the more remarkable, since the Dutch troops had already commenced concentration, and only awaited the word "forward," to dash across the frontier), the plenipotentiaries, in lieu of insisting upon the maintenance of peace, again spoke of their hopes of adjustment, and proposed that full powers should be transmitted to the Dutch plenipotentiaries to determine and sign a definitive treaty. "The hopes," said they, "that we derive on this head (the maintenance of peace) from the dispositions of his majesty, are the more accordant with those of the five powers, as being *guarantees of the suspension of arms*, concluded in November, the five courts are bound by solemn engagements, *which subsist in all their force*, to prevent a renewal of hostilities."

A rejoinder to this was put in by the Dutch minister on the 1st of August, stating that, "The king, who had never ceased to afford proofs of his sincere desire to co-operate in an arrangement, and to assure, as much as possible, the benefit of peace to Europe, had forwarded instructions to his plenipotentiaries in London to determine and sign a definitive treaty destined to regulate the separation between Holland and Belgium; but that his majesty had determined to support the negotiation by his military means (*ses moyens militaires*); a resolution doubly imperative, since a prince had taken possession of the Belgian throne, without previously satisfying the prescribed conditions of the Conference, and had sworn to a constitution injurious to the territorial rights of Holland." As a justification for this development of force, which the Conference at first interpreted as a mere demonstration, the Dutch minister added, "that the desire to conclude an armistice had not been realized; that a cessation of hostilities alone

existed ; that the king had already declared that he could not subject his kingdom to an indefinite prolongation of the *statu quo*, and that from the first of June he should hold himself at liberty to adopt such measures as best suited his own interests ; but only with the view of attaining that state of things which the act of separation had acknowledged as just and reasonable." A circular was addressed under the same date to the Dutch ambassadors at the five great courts, directing them to announce the king's intention of adopting coercive measures, and consequently to demand the assistance of those courts.

The sophistry and contradictions of the Netherlands cabinet on this occasion, could only be equalled by the apparent incredulity and apathy of the Conference. It is true that the Dutch had contrived to evade the execution of the armistice to which the Belgians had bound themselves on the 15th of December, and not less true that repeated partial infractions of this armistice were committed on both sides. But, although this convention was incomplete, an indefinite suspension of arms existed, under the immediate guarantee of the Conference ; which the Dutch had repeatedly acknowledged and appealed to, especially in their note of the 21st of May. According to the rights of nations, and the admitted laws of war, such suspension could not be broken without previous notice. Wherever history offers an example of sudden infractions of a truce, they are invariably stigmatized as acts of treachery and bad faith, incompatible with the usages of civilized nations. The observations of the Conference on this subject, though mild and dignified, plainly expressed their surprise and disapprobation. In their note of the 5th of July they declare, " that they could only construe the intention of the king to have recourse to *military measures*, as

applicable to the *interior* of Holland, for they could not believe that at the very moment when his majesty had communicated his anxious desire to negotiate for a definitive treaty, he should resolve to rekindle war, and to order the destruction of a great commercial city." The whole transaction was, in fact, tainted with an appearance of duplicity; for at the very instant the Dutch cabinet was boasting of its pacific intentions, and of its having forwarded full powers to its plenipotentiaries to draw up and sign a definitive treaty, secret orders were issued to the general commanding the army to commence a war of surprise, aggression and re-conquest, the ultimate object of which was only frustrated by French intervention.

Another extraordinary fact attending this business, was the admission by the Conference that it was only apprised of these movements by the public journals, and that no explanation could be obtained from Baron Falck or his colleague. The latter is readily accounted for; but it is not easy to imagine that the British government should have been so ill-informed of what was passing in Holland, or, if informed, that it could have mistaken the object of the concentration and preparations of the Dutch army. It might perhaps have been foreign to the probity of the plenipotentiaries to anticipate so remarkable a violation of international usages; but although every precaution was taken to conceal the intended operations, in order to render the surprise the more effective, it is hardly possible to conceive that the British ambassador at the Hague should have been so completely misled as to remain ignorant of what was passing on the frontier.

During many weeks the most active preparations had been making for this expedition. The organization of the army had been carried on steadily and success-

fully under the direction of Prince Frederick, who, however feeble as a strategist, possessed talent of the first order as an administrator. Having preserved the whole of its staff, artillery, engineers, hospital and commissariat departments; having an abundant supply of experienced officers, and having recruited the line regiments with a considerable number of Swiss and Germans, for the most part old soldiers; and being, above all things, inspired with unanimous sentiments of patriotism, obedience and devotion to the throne, the Dutch had succeeded in remodelling their army, which presented a general total of nearly 80,000 men, including 30,000 communal guards and volunteers. Of this force about 40,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, and seventy-two field pieces, exclusive of the garrisons of Antwerp and Maestricht, were disposable between the Scheldt and the Meuse, and were formed into four divisions of infantry, and one of cavalry. The first division (Van Gheen) held the right, the second (Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar) the right centre and advance, the third (Meyer) the left centre, and the fourth (Cort-Heiligers) principally composed of *schutters*, the extreme left. The cavalry, under Lieutenant-general Trip, was divided into two brigades, the one of heavy and the other of light horse; the former in reserve, the latter in advance. The whole continued under the command of Prince Frederick, until his elder brother, having been promoted to the rank of field-marshal, assumed the command on the 31st of July. The strategetical position of this force, whether for offence or defence, was admirable. Its right rested on the Scheldt, and was flanked by the citadel; its left leaned on the Meuse, and was protected by Maestricht. In its front lay a fine champaign country, without fortresses or formidable rivers; while its rear was shielded by Breda,

Bergen-op-Zoom, and impracticable marshes, offering imposing barriers and places of refuge in case of retreat.

The Dutch, who were well informed of the state of insubordination, inefficiency, and numerical weakness of their adversaries, and also knew the extreme facility of making a dash upon the Belgic capital, which was not above four easy marches from their outposts, secretly accelerated and extended their preparations during the month of July. The troops were encamped and manœuvred in large bodies. They were habituated to patrol and field duty; they were frequently reviewed, and encouraged by the presence of the king and royal family; and abundant magazines, hospitals, and means of transport were collected and attached to each division. The object of these preparations had long been known to the generals; and at length an order of the day, of the 26th of July, plainly indicated approaching hostilities, the news of which was enthusiastically received by the troops, who were eager to efface the stain of former reverses. Every thing being ready, the prince-generalissimus arrived at Breda on the 1st of August. A general order was immediately issued by him, in which he stated that the king had pronounced the word "*forward*;" that he appealed to the valour and loyalty of the troops, and, after offering a brief explanation of his political conduct in Belgium, terminated by saying that he hoped to prove, sword in hand, that the blood of the Nassaus flowed in his veins, and that his only object had been the good of his country. A second general order called upon officers and soldiers to enforce and maintain discipline.

Before dawn on the 2d, the different corps broke up from their cantonments, and pressed towards the Belgic frontier. The first division penetrating by Baerle-Hertog and Sonderegen, drove back the Belgian outposts upon

Merxplas. The second, advancing to Peppel and Weelde, established itself at L'Ele and Raevens, after a smartish encounter with General Niellon's advance guard. The third, debouching from the vicinity of Eindhoven, bivouacked at Arendonck and Rethy; while the corps of Cort-Heiligers moved upon Limbourg, and occupied Heusden. General Trip's heavy cavalry and three batteries of artillery remained in reserve at Alphen; and Boreel's light horse, and eighteen field pieces, were pushed on to their proper stations in advance. On the 3d, the prince followed up his successes, and carried Turnhout, his right being thrown across the Chaussée, near Vorslaer, menaced Antwerp. his centre threatened the high road to Brussels by Lierre, and his left that by Diest and Louvain. Two small flying columns issuing from Bergen-op-Zoom, simultaneously pressed forward on the extreme right by Calmpthout, Capelle and West Wezel; and while General Kock, commanding the troops in Zealand, made an attack on the Capitalen Dam, a detachment of marines and infantry, supported by the fleet, threw themselves on the half-ruined fort St. Marie, which was taken possession of after a trifling resistance. During this time Dibbets was not idle. Strong columns sallied from Maestricht, with directions to feel the flanks of the enemy's position, and to distract the attention of Daine's corps from its front. The first operations of the invading army were eminently successful. The grand object of the manœuvre on Turnhout was to impress the Belgian generals with an idea that it was the intention of the Dutch to make an attempt upon Antwerp, and to advance on Brussels by the road to Lierre; and for two or three days the stratagem succeeded.

Three plans were in fact open to the invaders, all offering prospects of success. One was to attempt a *coup de main* on Antwerp, seconded by the citadel and the flotilla. The second was to attack and overpower Tieken's



corps, and then to throw themselves on that of Daine, and after beating both in detail, to rush on Brussels,—a project of easy execution. The third was to spring in between both, to turn their flanks, to envelop Daine, and then to press forward, by St. Trond and Louvain, upon the capital. The latter plan was adopted, and had it been executed with vigour and celerity, the Dutch might easily have arrived at Brussels on the 7th, after annihilating Tieken and Daine, whose corps were utterly unable to resist any serious attack. On the morning of the 4th, the first and second divisions made a left flank movement by Gheel and Diest, and the third by Moll and Hasselt, with a view of establishing themselves on the Demer, and thence gaining the high road from Liege to Louvain; thus to cut off the communication between the former and the capital; while Cort-Heiligers watched Venloo and Limbourg, and Dibbets protected the rear by Tongres. But the movements of these troops were slow and undecided. Much valuable time was wasted in feeling the ground, in halting and reposing the troops, who moved with a degree of drowsy precaution utterly inconsistent with the object of the operation. Thus, three days had elapsed ere the advance had penetrated as far as Diest, the distance of a few miles only; and yet, with the exception of a trifling affair between a detachment of the Meuse army and Meyer's division, near Beringen, where the Belgic detachment displayed great gallantry, they met with little opposition. In lieu of boldly dashing forwards, so as to overwhelm Daine before he could collect his scattered division, the 5th was frittered away in patrolling and reconnoitering; and “on the 6th, the whole army maintained its positions, and halted to repose.”\* These forty-eight hours might have

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\* Despatch from his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange to the king, dated head-quarters, Gheel, 5th of August, 1831.

sufficed to bring the invaders nearly to the heights of St. Josse-ten-Noode.

It was not until the receipt of General Chasse's letter, announcing his determination to renew hostilities at half-past nine p. m., on the 4th, that the Belgians were aroused from their dream of security ; for although vague rumours of hostilities had been circulated, no violation of the suspension of arms, without previous notice, was deemed possible. Copies of this letter, dated the 1st, reached the king at Liege, and the government at Brussels in the afternoon of the 2d. This was followed by a despatch from Tieken, reporting the actual advance of the Dutch army. No sooner was this intelligence communicated to Leopold than he made instant preparations to return to his capital ; and having consulted those near his person, directed Mr. Lebeau to address a letter to Mr. Le Hon, to solicit the eventual assistance of France, whilst Mr. de Muelenaere, the foreign minister, also dispatched a letter to the same diplomatist at Paris. On the receipt of these despatches, telegraphic orders were issued for the instant concentration of the army of the north ; and Marshal Gerard, with the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours, prepared to leave Paris at a moment's notice. Utterly deceived as to the strength and efficiency of their own army, and having full confidence in its being able to protect the country from invasion, especially when aided by the civic guards and the levy *en masse* ; being misled themselves, and therefore induced to mislead others, De Muelenaere and his colleagues at Brussels repudiated all idea of admitting foreign succour, both as unconstitutional, uncalled for, and derogatory to the national honour. Indeed it was not until a copy of Mr. Lebeau's letter to Mr. Le Hon was returned from Paris on the 5th, that the Belgic foreign minister was informed that the former had assumed the grave but necessary re-

sponsibility of urging the French government to dispatch instant succour in the direction of Antwerp and Maestricht. This was no sooner known to the cabinet than it addressed a dispatch to the king, who had established his head-quarters at Malines, imploring his majesty to lose no time in endeavouring to prevent the entry of the French troops.

This request was conveyed to the king through another channel. Sir Robert Adair, who had been appointed successor to Lord Ponsonby, not having arrived, Mr. White again assumed the responsibility of proceeding to Malines in order to enable him to communicate the real state of affairs to his government, and having previously waited on the minister of foreign affairs, was desired "to implore his majesty on his knees to prevent the execution of a measure that would compromise the military character of the country." The message was speedily communicated to the king, who replied, "that the demand for assistance was intended to be *contingent*, not *absolute*; and that the letter to Mr. Le Hon was in substance similar to that which he had himself addressed to Lords Grey and Palmerston." This point must not be lost sight of; for it proves that the call for succour was only in case of need, not immediate. Of this sorrowful necessity, a few hours furnished abundant proofs. Great as the confidence of the king might have been in his own resources, and in the courage and enthusiasm of his troops and subjects, his recent inspection of the corps of Tieken and Daine, and the inefficiency of the staff, sufficed to shew that the forces were inadequate to resist the imposing masses advancing against them, and that it was of vital importance to be prepared for a reverse. The Belgian army was not, in fact, in a situation to offer resistance; and its defeat, instead of being a matter of extraordinary military glory to the Dutch,

could only have been averted by unpardonable want of skill on their part, or by the interference of the French.

At the moment when the Dutch troops passed the frontier, the Belgian force was distributed nearly as follows. The right, or army of the Meuse, under Lieut.-general Daine, an officer more distinguished for personal courage than for any great conversancy with the art of war, consisted of about 9,000 infantry, 800 cavalry, and 24 guns, the latter but half-horsed. Its head-quarters were at Hasselt, and it was echeloned from that place to Venloo and Ruremonde, covering an extent of twenty-five leagues. The left, or army of the Scheldt, under Lieut.-general Tieken, an old soldier, but of inferior merit, was composed of about 13,000 men, of which 3,000 were civic guards, with 12 field-pieces. The advance, under Major-general Niellon, who on this occasion evinced considerable military talent, was thrown out in front of Merxplas. Besides being charged with guarding the frontier, this latter army invested the citadel, held the fort Du Nord, and was disseminated over the country, from the Scheldt to Turnhout and Gheel. The centre being left unguarded, there was an hiatus of several miles, between the left of one of these corps and the right of the other, and thus the most important point of the whole line was left defenceless. In Flanders a body of 8,000 men occupied Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend; but including civic guards, the whole disposable force did not exceed 22,000 effectives between the Meuse and the Scheldt.

Some idea of the utter state of disorganization and unfitness of these troops for field duty, may be formed from the following extracts, from official letters and reports, addressed by Daine to the minister of war, which are of themselves sufficient to account for the disasters that ensued. "I can prove," said he, "that my division

was the only one that possessed *a shadow of organization or discipline* ; that it was the only point of support to the government ; and that since the commencement of the war of independence, it has not given to the nation those fatal examples of *revolts, treasons, and scandalous mutinies* that have so often spread alarm. The chambers have resounded with exaggerated praises of the volunteers, lavished on them by imprudent orators, who foolishly apologized for their indiscipline and mutinous conduct, while they depreciated the services of the regular troops, and thus fomented the mistrust and jealousy which exists between those corps. Organization proceeded slowly. The provisional government appealed to the old Belgian officers in the Dutch army ; almost all hastened at the call of their country, and abandoning rank and honours acquired by long service, joyfully embraced the national cause. How were they rewarded ? A set of young men, who had behaved well during the revolution, now arrogated to themselves the sole possession of military capacity, and divided amongst them the best appointments. Some became majors, colonels, chiefs of staff and generals—all were determined to be at least captains. Attachments to oaths, to honour, and one's colours counted for nothing. Under the pretext of patriotism, disloyalty and desertion were recompensed ; even fortresses were sold for a step of rank. Seeing the necessity of bringing my division gradually into a state of discipline, I demanded the ministers' permission to encamp. I received no answer. I also applied for a quarter-master general and some experienced staff officers, to command my brigades of infantry and cavalry. No reply was vouchsafed me. All this was subsequently promised, but has never been accomplished. I asked for a commissariat establishment, infantry tumbrels, camp kettles, mess-tins, canteens, axes,

picks, spades, and various objects of field and camp equipage. No answer. It had been agreed that my corps should be reinforced, but it was never augmented by a single man. In lieu of the efficient battalion that I sent to Brussels, to maintain internal tranquillity, I received a horde of volunteers, who, on their arrival at Hasselt, commenced by giving to my line troops a most outrageous example of indiscipline, and to the inhabitants of Limbourg a specimen of the anarchy reigning in other provinces.\* If hostilities commenced," continues the general, "it is my duty to inform you that *I am not in a situation to make war in a manner likely to insure success or honour to our arms.* I have been promised every thing,—no promise has been fulfilled. My field hospital waggons are not horsed, and reinforcements do not arrive; I have neither provisions, ammunition, nor magazines."†

"It was in the midst of this state of affairs that hostilities commenced. My troops were cantoned and disseminated by order of the war minister, in various places, many of them eighteen leagues distant from my headquarters. My position was critical. I was abandoned with 9000 men, without generals, staff, stores, provisions, commissariat, hospitals, or spies, and deserted by the population. In order to obey orders, it would have been necessary for me to cut my way through 40,000 men, commanded by the princes in person, having ten generals under their orders."‡

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\* The misconduct of these volunteers was carried to such a pitch in this province, that the governor, Baron de Loe, having vainly demanded the interference of government and the punishment of the criminals, resigned office.

† Extracts from Lieutenant-General Daine's correspondence with the minister of war, dated May, June, and July, 1831.

‡ Memoir of Daine to King Leopold. This memoir was written to justify his conduct in having disobeyed the king's orders to join the Scheldt army.

Conscious of his own weakness, and of the importance of strengthening the centre of the line of defence, and of keeping up a communication with Tieken, Daine applied to the former, to make a lateral movement, so as to place their flanks in contact, and thus to cover the high road from Diest to Louvain. The following extract of a letter from the former, dated Schilde, 8th of July, will farther demonstrate the deplorable state of the army: "I have received no reinforcement; you know that a corps of observation of 10,000 men—2000 of the line, and 8000 civic guards—was to be sent to me, to blockade the citadel and guard the city and banks of the Scheldt; and that, independent of this, you and I were each to have a disposable force of 15,000 effective combatants. Well! not one man of the promised 10,000 has reached me, and I am far from having the other 15,000. Thus, with these feeble resources, I garrison Antwerp, and occupy three villages on the left bank. I hold the batteries on the right, and blockade the citadel. I extend from hence to Turnhout. The high road from Antwerp, and from thence along the frontier to Gheel, is echeloned by my troops. Thus, my dear general, it is not possible for me to consent to your request, in regard to the positions you desired me to occupy. You must, therefore, occupy them yourself. I must add, that I have only two batteries of artillery, and that the enemy's principal forces are concentrated at Tilburg, Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and Roosendaal; and it is probable, if he attempts the slightest movement, that it will be upon Antwerp, in conjunction with the fleet and citadel."

When the successful progress of the Dutch was known, and the real condition of the army discovered, universal indignation fell upon the war minister, Defailly, who, unable to resist the general clamour, resigned office on the 4th, and was succeeded by Major-General D'Hane.

But although this blame was partly merited, and although neither he nor any of his predecessors possessed sufficient energy or experience for re-creating an army composed of such crude and disjointed materials as those at their disposal, there existed many palliative causes; and, under existing circumstances, the task might have baffled the capacities of the ablest and most practised soldier. It was to the extravagant bombast of a portion of the press and deputies; to an exaggerated confidence in their own courage; to a disregard of the rules of war; to the interference of the association; to the constant attempts to suborn officers, now by the agents of one faction, and now by the emissaries of another; to the encouragement given to insubordination; to the preference accorded to the volunteers over the line troops; and to the want of good officers, combined with the general uncertainty and demoralization that every where prevailed, that the state of the army must be attributed. The war ministers might have done more; but hitherto none of them had a fair chance. It was impossible to enforce obedience. Indeed, the press and the chambers were commanders-in-chief, and exercised their authority over every branch of the service, counteracting and intimidating the minister and his staff.

Ignorant, however, of the perils of their situation, and the inefficiency of their army, the nation hailed the announcement of hostilities with universal bursts of joy. A general shout of "To arms! Liberals and Catholics! to arms!" re-echoed from the remotest corners of the country. Elated with the remembrance of their former successes, similar triumphs were eagerly anticipated. Men put on the blouse as though it were a talisman destined to strike terror into the hearts of the invaders. The streets and highways resounded with songs of vic-



tory, and the captive hosts of the enemy were already led in anticipated triumph to the capital.

Whatever might have been the feelings of the monarch at this unlooked-for intelligence, he concealed them beneath an air of perfect coolness and self-possession, which never once forsook him during this arduous and critical period. Hastening from Liege to Brussels, he summoned a council of war, and adopted every possible precaution that prudence suggested, or the resources of the country would permit. While the regulars and reserves were everywhere put in motion, Charles de Brouckère, who had replaced De Sauvage at the home department, directed the instant assemblage of the civic guards; to whom their commander in chief, Emanuel D'Hoogvorst, issued a general order, designating the different points of rendezvous, and announcing his intention to await them upon the frontier. Being resolved to share the fate of the inhabitants of Antwerp, should the interruption of the armistice lead to any serious misfortune, Leopold removed his head-quarters to that city on the afternoon of the 4th; not, however, without issuing a proclamation, appealing to the courage of the nation, and summoning them to follow him to the post of danger.\* This appeal was promptly, enthusiastically responded to. The streets of Brussels, and the roads leading to the frontier, were crowded with volunteers, loudly demanding to be led to battle. There was no lack of courage or good-will amongst them. But being without organization, necessities, or provisions; being, in fact, a mere motley congregation of armed men, without unity or a shadow of discipline, their presence was more detrimental than beneficial to the defence of the country. They might have been of some value for bush

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\* See Appendix, No. 34.

or street fighting, but to employ them in the open field was but to lead them to certain defeat. Five thousand well organized troops would have been of more value than these myriads of willing but useless auxiliaries. But the moment was now passed, it was too late to apply the remedy. The gangrene of insubordination and confusion had penetrated to the very marrow. Never was a country surprised in a situation so utterly defenceless; never was victory more certain, or more easily obtained.

An attempt having been made by Major-general Tabor, the commandant of Antwerp, to induce Chassé to consent to the neutrality of the city, the latter declined; more, however, with the view of augmenting the general panic and confusion, than with any serious intention of injuring the inhabitants. The consequent terror of these poor people was intense. The horrors of the former bombardment recurred in all its freshness to their minds. Such as could move, again fled, carrying with them their lightest valuables. The suburbs and roads towards South Brabant were crowded with weeping fugitives of all ages and sexes, intermingled with peasants and droves of cattle escaping from the inundated polders. The alarm of those that were compelled to remain, though somewhat allayed by the presence of the king on the night of the 4th, was vividly increased on the following morning; for Chassé, being determined to destroy the Belgic batteries erected in front of St Laurent, had ordered a sortie in that quarter, which he supported with his heavy guns. This enterprise was successfully executed by a detachment of 800 men, who, filing round the covered way behind the Lunette Kiel, gallantly sprang into the Belgian trenches, and after routing a battalion which fled in confusion, spiked the guns, and then withdrew in good order into the citadel.

General Belliard, who had returned to Brussels as minister plenipotentiary to the court of Leopold, and had followed the king to Antwerp, had also attempted on the previous evening to obtain a prolongation of the convention; but having failed, renewed the negotiation on the 5th, declaring that France and the great powers had taken the city under their protection, and that Chassé would be held responsible for the consequences. The veteran governor having succeeded in his sortie, and being no way disposed to injure the city, consented to suspend operations until he should receive instructions from his government. And although the latter refused to ratify the renewal of the armistice, it was eventually settled that there should be no resumption of hostilities unless provoked by the Belgians. The security of Antwerp being thus in some measure guaranteed, the king removed his head-quarters to Malines on the 5th, and having quickly penetrated the designs of the Dutch, issued pressing orders to Daine to make a left flank movement, so as to unite himself with the army of the Scheldt in the neighbourhood of Westerloo, on the Nethc. Instructions were at the same time sent to Tieken to move by his right in the same direction. Daine, however, thought proper to disobey, and thus destroyed the only possible chance there was of concentrating the whole army, and perhaps of arresting the progress of the enemy by forcing him to give battle in a disadvantageous position. It was the disobedience of these orders, which might and ought to have been executed on the night of the 6th or the morning of the 7th, that mainly contributed to the subsequent disasters. General opinion severely censured Daine's conduct, not so much for the loss of a battle, but because, in despite of reiterated commands, he assumed the responsibility of maintaining his position, and thus exposed, not only his own

troops but those under Tieken, to inevitable destruction.

In the meantime the confusion of the military authorities at Antwerp, and indeed in every other part of the country, was only to be equalled by the storm of indignation that burst upon Defailly for the miserable state of inefficiency into which the army had fallen. Shouts of treason and Orangism assailed him from every quarter. For the people, ignorant and unreflecting, attributed to treachery that which in fact emanated from causes beyond the control of Defailly, or of any previous minister. Such was the fury of the populace both at Antwerp and Malines, that he was more than once exposed to imminent danger; and it is probable that his life would have fallen a sacrifice to the exasperation of the multitude, had he not escaped from Antwerp to Malines, and been dispatched by the king from the latter place on the evening of the 5th, with orders to accelerate the junction of Daine's corps.

Thus matters stood until the 7th, when the Dutch recommenced their forward movement, with the intention of surrounding and cutting off Daine, who, as if he had been playing his adversary's game, persisted in keeping his ground in front of Hasselt, and even allowed the Duke of Saxe Weimar to turn his left flank, and to penetrate to St. Trond, and thus to intercept the high road to Brussels. The plan of the invading army was simple, and well adapted for success. Van Gheen threw himself into Diest. Meyer, after a sharp affair of outposts, took up a position near Herck; Cort-Heiligers advanced in the direction of Sonhoven, and a detachment from Maestricht moved upon Tongres, whilst the Duke of Saxe Weimar made himself master of St. Trond. On the following morning, the various dispo-

sitions being completed, the Prince of Orange, at the head of the first and third divisions, with forty-eight field-pieces, advanced upon Curingen and Hasselt, supported by the whole of his cavalry and reserves, with the exception of one brigade left at Diest; while Cort-Heiligers moved from Sonhoven, and the whole now fell upon Daine's corps. The latter, without scarcely waiting for the attack, threw down their arms, and fled in a state of unparalleled disorder to the gates of Liege; leaving behind them nearly seven hundred killed, wounded, and missing, and abandoning five field-pieces, seven ammunition waggons, and the greater part of their baggage and camp equipage. Successful opposition against such overwhelming numbers was not to be expected, from a force so inefficient; but the panic and rout that took place rendered this affair one of the most painful that ever occurred to any body of troops arrogating to themselves the name of an army. There were doubtless several instances of distinguished valour on the part of isolated detachments and individuals; but, regarding the affair as a general action, nothing could be more deplorable. Ignorant of the full extent of his triumph, the Prince of Orange ordered the Duke of Saxe Weimar to rejoin the main body, and maintained his head-quarters at Curingen on the 8th, and only removed as far as Hasselt on the 9th, with the intention of pursuing an enemy whom he still expected to find in position near Tongres. Having at length received information that he had no opponents in his front, and that Boecop, with a detachment from Maestricht, occupied Tongres, it was resolved to bring up the left shoulder, and to march upon Louvain on the 10th. Therefore, while the second division, with the light cavalry, pushed on to the banks of the Geete, within a league of Tirlemont, the third division and heavy ca-

valry occupied St. Trond, and the whole of the first division united at Diest. Cort-Heiligers remained at Hasselt, and the heavy cavalry and reserve artillery were cantoned at Looz. On the 11th, the whole army, with the exception of Cort-Heiligers and Boecop, who were left to watch Venloo and Liege, advanced slowly on Louvain, and established their outposts near Boutersem. By this movement Tieken's right flank was endangered, and a retrograde movement became necessary.

In the meantime king Leopold, having removed his head-quarters to Aerschot on the 8th, ordered Tieken's corps to assemble in front of that place, in the direction of Westmerbeek, with the intention of driving the Dutch out of Montaigu, and meeting Daine, who was expected to execute his movement of junction at latest on the evening of that day.

On joining the troops, Leopold was received with loud acclamations, and appears to have been so well satisfied with the ardour and good disposition of the different regiments, that he forthwith addressed a letter to General Belliard, in which, after alluding to this subject, he says, "the circumstances are so favourable, that I think it urgent to stop the movement of Marshal Gerard. This feeling strongly prevails throughout the whole army, and I think we ought to fight without foreign assistance. I also think, that for the sake of a good understanding between the powers, it is absolutely desirable not to let the marshal advance until urgent circumstances shall require it."\*

A despatch from Mr. Van de Weyer, the Belgic envoy in London, which reached Brussels on the 7th, served to

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\* Letter from Leopold to General Belliard, dated Aerschot, 8th of August, 1831. This letter was of course written under the impression that Daine would execute the king's orders to form a junction with Tieken

augment the confidence of the king, and to exhilarate the spirits of the soldiers, to whom its substance was immediately communicated. Circumstantial reports of a revolt among the Belgian troops in the Dutch service in Batavia, and of the consequent occupation of that valuable colony in the name of the revolutionary government, having reached London from Java, Mr. Van de Weyer lost no time in communicating the intelligence to his government. This report, though much too lightly credited, was not altogether devoid of probability. For although the utmost vigilance was exercised by the Dutch government in preventing intelligence of passing events from being spread among the Belgic and French soldiers, who composed at least two-thirds of the general total of the colonial force, yet sufficient was known amongst them to create an ardent desire to espouse the national cause, or at all events to escape from a service where they had become the objects of suspicion and injustice, while their juniors at home were reaping rewards and rapid advancement. The Belgian government is accused of having invented this intelligence for the purpose of sustaining the drooping courage of the people. This accusation is unjust; but even admitting that it were not so, the stratagem at the moment would have been excusable.

The king, having concentrated Tieken's corps, and assembled a numerous body of civic guards, which swelled this force to 15,000 men, was already advancing upon Montaignu, when the intelligence of Daine's discomfiture reached head-quarters. This unlooked-for misfortune rendered an instant change of operations imperative. It was evident that the Dutch would not, or rather *ought* not, to lose a moment in pressing upon Brussels; and consequently the only chance of saving the capital was to fall back with all possible speed on Louvain, and by taking

up a position before that place, to endeavour to arrest the enemy's progress until the arrival of the French auxiliary force, which General Belliard had sent for the moment he became acquainted with the defeat at Hasselt. Consequently, the Scheldt army, which had now dwindled away to little more than 8,000 regulars, with eighteen field pieces, retired upon Aerschot, and on the evening of the 10th bivouacked in front of Louvain, with their outposts at Boutersem.

To describe the confusion that reigned at Louvain at this moment would be as difficult as to account for the tardy advance of the Dutch. With the exception of the king. Mr. de Brouckère, and a few others, the whole staff appeared to be overwhelmed by the danger of their position. A mournful foreboding enfeebled the energies of the officers; but the men, ignorant of their peril, and indifferent to moral results, seemed but little discouraged. Crowded with volunteers, artillery waggons, and baggage, Louvain presented an indescribable chaos. There was no regularity, no order—all commanded, none obeyed. The profoundest inattention to the ordinary rules of defence was exhibited, and the most necessary precautions neglected. Many of those who had started from Brussels armed to the very teeth, and vexing the air with bombastic shouts of defiance, were now seen anxiously retracing their steps, crest-fallen, dejected, and fully aware that if the French army did not arrive promptly, Brussels would be lost. Some of them were so satisfied of this fact that they deemed it prudent to seek safety in the distant provinces. Indeed, had the Prince of Orange, in lieu of wasting valuable time in making reconnoissances and collecting information, boldly pushed on with the second and third divisions and light cavalry by the high road, while Van Gheen and the heavy brigade manœuvred on his right, he might easily



have reached the heights commanding Louvain on the evening of the 10th, and would have surprised Clump's brigade of Belgians, harassed and fatigued, in the act of filing through the long narrow streets, and either have cut them to pieces as they debouched from the city, or forced them to fly in confusion towards Malines;—an operation the more easy, since, until dusk on the evening of the 10th, there was not a man between Louvain and St. Trond, save a few weak detachments of civic guards and a score of mounted gendarmes, who must have retired at the first serious approach of his advanced guard. But the afternoon of the 8th, the whole of the 9th, 10th, and 11th were frittered away in feeling the ground, and in advancing about twenty-eight miles; so that it was not until the evening of the latter day that the heads of the Dutch columns reached Boutersem, whence they were subsequently withdrawn to Roosbeek, after a sharp skirmish with the Belgian outposts, whose main force had taken up a position on the heights behind the former village.

Finding their adversaries weak and demoralized, without cavalry, and with a comparatively insignificant artillery, the Dutch generals at length roused themselves from their lethargy, and prepared for more vigorous action. A general attack was determined upon, but, though ably planned, it was feebly and slowly executed. At day-break the first division and heavy cavalry, advancing from St. Jorres Winghe, moved round the heights of Pellenberg, and menaced the Belgian left flank. The third division, holding to the Tirlemont Chaussée, manœuvred on the centre; and the Duke of Saxe Weimar, with the second division and light cavalry, obliquing to the left, crossed the Dyle between Corbeek and Heverlé, and thus completely turning the Belgian right, threw himself in their rear, and taking possession of the Brussels road, cut off the

communication between Louvain and the capital, and pushed on his vedettes in the direction of Cortenberg and Terveuren. In the event of defeat—and defeat was inevitable—the only prospect of escape for the Belgians was by the narrow road on the banks of the Malines canal; and this could only be effected under a heavy fire, and amidst the confusion resulting from retreating through the long and tortuous streets of a city, encumbered with baggage and artillery.

This affair has been dignified by the Dutch with the name of a battle. It was at best but a severe skirmish; executed, it is true, on the part of the assailants, with the steadiness and precision of a sham-fight, and on that of the Belgians with all the courage that circumstances admitted.—But the latter, though full of ardour at first, were soon discouraged, and lost confidence in themselves and their officers, especially when they discovered the desertion of the civic guards, who, with few exceptions, fled in every direction, casting away their arms and accoutrements. The effective force was thus reduced to little more than 7,000 men. Disheartened and outnumbered in every direction, these successively fell back from position to position, until being completely outflanked, they were compelled to take refuge behind the walls of the city. It was in vain that Leopold and his staff rode into the hottest of the fire, and with admirable coolness and self-possession, endeavoured to supply the deficiency of numbers by the ability of his dispositions.—It was in vain that he multiplied himself in every direction, and performed the united duties of king, general, and subaltern. The odds were too powerful, the discouragement too great. Flight or surrender were the only alternatives. His situation was most critical; but the inertness of his opponents saved him. Had the Prince of Orange availed himself of his numerous and brilliant cavalry;

had he dashed forward with that daring spirit which was once his characteristic on the field of battle, and had he not been shackled by the drowsy routine of Dutch tactics—neither the king nor a man of his army ought to have escaped. It is true that his royal highness, who had a horse shot under him, displayed his wonted gallantry and indifference to personal peril; but his movements were not sufficiently accelerated, and although his enemies retired before him in confusion, there was an utter want on his part of that rapidity and decision which are essential to decisive actions. The manœuvres ought to have been executed at the charge step—they were performed at funeral pace. He was, however, moving forward and preparing to follow up his successes, when a flag of truce appeared upon the high road, and arrested him in his career.

The bearer of this was Lord William Russell, charged with a letter from the British ambassador, Sir Robert Adair, who having reached Brussels on the afternoon of the 9th, lost no time in hastening to the royal headquarters. The purport of this letter was to demand a suspension of arms, and to inform the Prince of Orange that the French advanced guard had already reached Wavre on his flank, and Brussels in his front. The victorious general, bitterly disappointed at an intervention which threatened to rob him of the fruits of victory, was little disposed to consent; but knowing the inutility of opposing Marshal Gerard, and feeling that enough had been done to humiliate his enemy, if not to re-establish the character of the Dutch army, he directed his aide-de-camp, Count Stirum, to return with Lord William Russell, in order to verify the fact of the French advance. In the meantime, however, his troops continued their forward movement.

Finding that Lord William Russell had failed in the

principal object of his mission, and that not a moment should be lost in relieving Leopold from his hazardous position, Sir Robert Adair determined to proceed in person towards the prince. Hastily throwing himself across the first horse he could procure, the veteran diplomatist galloped through the confused masses which encumbered the streets and suburbs of the city, and reckless of all personal danger, gallantly traversed the fire of the contending parties, who utterly regardless of the flag of truce, borne by the ambassador's attendant, continued a sharp but irregular combat. Having reached the prince, whom he found advancing at the head of his skirmishers, Sir Robert earnestly insisted on a suspension of arms ; which, after considerable discussion, was acceded to, on condition that the Belgic troops should evacuate Louvain, and deliver up the city to the Dutch. These preliminaries being determined upon, a convention was drawn up, and signed by General Goblet on the part of the Belgian government ; and, after an accidental renewal of the cannonade, to which a few Dutch officers and soldiers fell victims ; orders were sent to the Duke of Saxe Weimar to halt, and thus hostilities terminated.

In the meantime, General Belliard, who had remained at Louvain on the 9th, no sooner heard of Daine's derout, an event which he had probably foreseen, than without waiting to consult the king, he dispatched a courier to Marshal Gerard, urging him not to lose a moment in pressing the march of his troops both on the front and flank of the advancing enemy. In consequence of this, the army of the north, which had already drawn close to the frontier, broke up from its cantonments in three columns early in the morning of the 10th. The right debouching from Givet on Namur ; the centre from Maubeuge and Valenciennes on Wavre and Brussels ; and the left entering

from Lille by Tournay, directing itself upon the Flanders. The march of these troops was so rapid, that the leading brigade under the Duke of Orleans reached Brussels before mid-day on the 12th, while that of General de la Woesteen, simultaneously traversed Wavre; thus performing a distance of more than sixty miles in little more than two days. On the morning of the 13th, the French vedettes were pushed on to Cortenberg, Terveuren, and Grez, within sight of those of the Dutch. On the same day the Prince of Orange and Marshal Gerard concluded a convention, by which it was stipulated that the Dutch army should forthwith commence its retrograde movement, by Tirlemont, St. Trond, and Hasselt, followed by the French, who were to escort them to the frontiers. By the 20th, the whole of the former had regained the limits of North Brabant, and on the following morning, the French troops falling back upon the positions they had occupied on the 13th and 14th, remained in cantonments until final arrangements were completed for their evacuating the Belgic territory. Some difficulties and discussions had arisen as to this point; discussions that for a moment cast a shade over the amicable relations of the British and French diplomatists at Brussels. But, through the discretion and temper of both parties, these difficulties were speedily removed, and the French gave another convincing proof of their good faith and anxious desire to maintain peace, first by withdrawing 20,000 men, and then by recalling the whole of their forces; the last of which recrossed the frontier on the 31st.

The panic and confusion that reigned at Brussels, at the near approach of the Dutch forces, was augmented on its being known that the advanced guard was commanded by the Duke of Saxe Weimar, the man of all others most dreaded by the patriots. The insults that had been so lavishly cast upon that prince, were expected

to be repaid with ten-fold interest. No mercy was awaited at hands so embittered. In truth, the ungracious language of the duke in the presence of Lord W. Russell, and his still more intemperate treatment of Colonel Prisse, the Belgian officer who had been entrusted with a flag of truce, afforded some grounds for sinister apprehensions.\* Violent and hasty, however, as his highness might have been, some allowance must be made for the irritation of his feelings. The defeats of September and October, and the calumnies heaped on himself by the Belgic press and people, had long rankled in his heart. The time for avenging these injuries, and for retorting upon a hated enemy the humiliation he had received, had arrived. Flushed with success, and having nothing between him and the capital but a flying, terror-stricken foe, he found himself suddenly arrested by the fiat of diplomacy—forerunner of the strong arm of French intervention. The sword which he had hoped to sheathe in the hearts of those whom he designated as rebellious traitors, was thus doomed to return half blooded to the scabbard, and all farther dreams of revenge and glory vanished.

The alarm of the people on receiving the intelligence of Daine's defeat, and the consequent retreat of Tieken's corps, was only to be equalled by the confusion which pervaded every branch of the administration. The most

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\* The manner in which the duke permitted himself to speak of the King of England was such as to call forth the utmost indignation on the part of the gallant and loyal soldier in whose presence it was uttered. A Russell, and of all Russells perhaps Lord William, was the last man to allow any one, no matter what his rank, to speak in unbecoming terms of his sovereign. A personal encounter would probably have been the result of this affair had not the British government, at the suggestion of Sir Robert Adair, taken the subject in hand, and preferred a formal complaint to the cabinet of the Hague.

prominent personages of the revolution, especially such as held themselves liable to the re-action of Dutch vengeance, either fled or took measures to secure a hasty retreat. The streets were almost deserted ; the shouts of triumph and defiance that had hitherto rent the air, were hushed. Anxiety and dejection were depicted on every countenance, save here and there where a few partisans of the old government were seen, maliciously sneering at the discomfiture of the patriots, and eagerly looking towards the roads by which they expected the arrival of their ancient masters. Some even went so far as to prepare congratulatory addresses and banquets for the prince, whose victorious entry was regarded as inevitable ; for the city lay at his mercy, disheartened and defenceless. Any attempt at resistance would have been in fact preposterous. Grown wise by experience, it could not be supposed that the Dutch generals would again compromise their honour and the lives of their men by an assault. A bombardment was looked on as inevitable. Indeed, had cannon or howitzers not been employed, there would have been no opposition. The spirit and energy that characterized the defence of September, had ebbed away. The blouse had lost its infallibility ; it had become an object of derision to the enemy. The cabinet council met, but could advise nothing. The regency also assembled, but was equally at a loss how to act. To do them all justice, their own distress was considerably augmented by their regrets for the painful position of the king, whose flight or capture was deemed inevitable. The sturdy old burgomaster, Rouppe, proposed sounding the tocsin, and making an appeal to the spirit of the people ; while the few military men remaining in the capital made a demonstration of defence, by placing four or five cannon at the Louvain and Namur gates, and posting the sedentary civic guards

upon the boulevards. But the futility of resistance was so evident, that the more prudent, and those were the majority, held it advisable to consider the best means of deprecating the wrath of the enemy, and thus, by timely capitulation, to secure the city from the disasters which threatened it, should the Dutch reach its walls before the expected succour from France. Such was the state of affairs, until positive intelligence was received of the approach of the army of the north. Indeed, it was not until the bayonets of the French advance guard were seen glittering on the heights leading from Hal, that confidence was perfectly restored, and the citizens and government once more breathed freely.

The policy or utility of an expedition undertaken with the foreknowledge of Prussian neutrality, and in the face of British and French armed intervention, has been much questioned. It is true that the invaders were far from reaping all the advantages which might have been derived from their own superiority, and the weakness of their enemy, had they exerted greater activity and energy; but there can be little doubt that essential moral benefits were produced by the short campaign, the plan of which had been long digested, and even submitted to the judgment of some of the ablest foreign strategists, one of whom, the Prussian Colonel Scharnhorst, accompanied the Dutch head-quarters. In the first place, the expedition roused and animated the Dutch nation and army, and rallied them more firmly than ever round the throne. Secondly, it replaced the heir apparent in the confidence of the troops, and affection of the people, who had nether pardoned him his long predilection for the Belgians, nor his proceedings when at Antwerp. Thirdly, it restored the honour of the Netherlands soldiers, which had been so cruelly wounded by the deplorable failure at Brussels, and the no less in-



glorious defeats of Walhem and Berchem. Not that this was strictly just, for although there may be much glory in successes obtained by a handful of undisciplined volunteers, over regular troops provided with cavalry, efficient artillery, and all the proper appurtenances of war—yet no great honour can be acquired when the tables are reversed, and the victory is gained by disciplined and well-appointed troops over a mere armed multitude. Fourthly, it turned the tide of general sympathy more strongly than ever in favour of Holland, while it covered their adversaries with contempt and ridicule; a contumely rendered still more galling from the previous vauntings and bombastic bravadoes of the Belgic press and congress. Fifthly, it operated so favourably in a political point of view, as to lead to the retraction of the eighteen articles, and to a nearer approach to the original basis of separation. In short, had not France intervened, the Dutch might have fulfilled their intentions of dictating their conditions from the capital of Belgium. However liable to criticism the military operations might have been, as regarded the impetus of execution, still the plan was admirably adapted to ensure success, and afforded convincing proofs of the irresistible superiority of unity and subordination over dissension and anarchy. The expedition produced another benefit, since it demonstrated to Europe the utter inefficiency of disorganized bodies, when acting in the open field against regular troops. The extraordinary successes gained by the patriots in 1830 had gone far to subvert the established tactical maxims derived from the experience of ages; the disaster of 1831 restored the question to its proper footing.

## CHAPTER X.

MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE—SUSPENSION OF ARMS—  
PROTOCOL RELATIVE TO THE DEMOLITION OF CERTAIN FORTRESSES—NEGOTIATIONS RENEWED—NOTES OF THE CONFERENCE, RELATIVE TO THE CELEBRATED TREATY OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ARTICLES—DISCUSSION AND ACCEPTATION OF THIS TREATY BY THE BELGIANS—ITS RATIFICATION BY THE GREAT POWERS—RESERVES OF RUSSIA, AUSTRIA, AND PRUSSIA—REMONSTRANCES AND REJECTION OF THE HAGUE CABINET—REPLY OF THE CONFERENCE—MEASURES OF MILITARY ORGANIZATION ADOPTED IN BELGIUM—C. DE BROUCKERE, EVAIN, DESPREZ—FOREIGN OFFICERS ADMITTED INTO THE BELGIAN SERVICE—ORGANIZATION OF KING LEOPOLD'S HOUSEHOLD—BARON DE STOCKMAR—MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE TO INDUCE THE KING OF HOLLAND TO EXECUTE THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED UPON HIM—LORD PALMERSTON'S THEME—MARRIAGE OF LEOPOLD WITH THE PRINCESS LOUSIA OF ORLEANS.

WHILE these events were passing in Belgium, the Conference lost no time in adopting measures to arrest the further progress of hostilities. Their note of the 5th of August was immediately followed by the protocol of the 6th (No. 31), sanctioning French intervention by land, and accepting the offer of a British squadron, destined to blockade the Dutch ports. It was stipulated, however, that the French troops should confine their operations to the left bank of the Meuse, that neither Maestricht nor Venloo should on any account be invested, and that the auxiliary army should retire within the French limits as soon as the armistice should be re-established on the previous footing. This protocol was backed by an energetic remonstrance on the part of the French government, denouncing the rupture of the armistice "as an unjust aggression," and direct violation of Belgic neutrality and independence "*recognized by the*

*great powers ;*” and stating that, “ if the Dutch troops did not immediately retire within the line of the armistice, they would have to encounter a French army.” This was replied to by the Dutch cabinet in a note of the 9th, in which, while it very justly declared that it was ignorant that the independence of Belgium had been recognized by the great powers, it speciously pretended that “ the march of the Dutch army, far from concerning or compromising the independence or neutrality of Belgium, had no other object than to realize the coercive measures announced by the five powers, in the event of Belgium not accepting the annex A of the 12th protocol, and consequently that it was impossible to qualify this movement as ‘an unjust aggression,’ without admitting that the five powers had committed an act of injustice in establishing the basis of separation. Such being the case, it was hoped that a French army would not be sent into Belgium, but that if the French government persisted in its intention, the Dutch troops should forthwith be recalled within their own territory.” The forward movement of the Prince of Orange on the 10th, 11th, and 12th, and the disbelief evinced by his royal highness of the arrival of Marshal Gerard’s army, sufficiently prove that these operations were undertaken under the erroneous impression that, although the Conference had often menaced intervention, the mutual jealousy of the great powers was too great ever to admit the actual entry into Belgium of a French army. Indeed, the clamours that were raised in England, and the doubts that were thrown upon the loyalty and good faith of the French government, were sufficient to corroborate this supposition. It is true the powers had menaced coercive measures ; but in so doing they never intended either that Belgium or Holland should take the law into their own hands. On the contrary, their threatened interference was expressly intended to prevent any col-

lision between the principal parties. This was the principle acted upon in August, 1831, and at the subsequent siege of the citadel in 1832.

The retreat of the Dutch troops having been communicated to the Conference, the plenipotentiaries issued the 32nd and 33rd protocols, certifying this event, and urging a six weeks' suspension of arms, and an immediate renewal of the negotiations. This proposition was accepted by Holland on the 29th, but was not unreservedly acceded to by the adverse party. The Belgic government demanded sundry preliminary explanations:—1st, As to the nature of the guarantee to be given by the powers to prevent a renewal of hostilities; and 2ndly, whether, at the expiration of the given period, each party would be at liberty to have recourse to arms without further notice. This hesitation on the part of Belgium, was the natural result of the late aggression, effected in the midst of a suspension of arms which had also been *guaranteed* by the great powers. Its sudden violation rendered it imperative on the government to secure themselves as far as possible from all chance of a similar surprise. The discussions consequent upon this subject, and those relative to the payment of the expenses which France was disposed to saddle on Belgium, were the principal causes that prevented the immediate withdrawal of the French army. To these reclamations the Conference returned a brief and vague explanation—but preremptorily declared that they considered “the renewed suspension of arms as reciprocally accepted, and consequently that an armistice subsisted and would subsist from the 29th of August to the 10th of October, under the guarantee of the five courts.”\*

The inability of the powers to restrain Holland from

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\* Protocol 37, 30th of August.

its former aggression, naturally awakened general scepticism as to the efficacy of their present guarantee; therefore the Belgic government considered it their duty to protest in the most forcible manner against the faculty of either party to recommence hostilities at the expiration of the original term. However, when this term arrived, it formally acceded to a prorogation of the armistice until the 25th. This period being expired, no farther renewal took place; and thus, according to the strict letter, each party was at liberty to attack the other without the formality of a preliminary declaration. In the meantime, and in virtue of the protocol of the 10th of September (No. 40), the whole of the prisoners were exchanged without regard to rank or number on either side; a circumstance not unworthy of remark, since the amount of Dutch detained in Belgium far exceeded that of the Belgians who were captive in Holland.

In the meantime an underplot, subsidiary to the grand political drama, had long occupied the attention of Great Britain and the northern powers, and given rise to important negotiations; which, however, had nearly fallen to the ground, not so much from any hostility to the principle, as from difference of opinion as to the minor details and mode of execution. As early as the beginning of April, the plenipotentiaries of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia had deliberated on the measures necessary to be adopted at some future epoch in regard to such Netherlands fortresses as had been constructed at the expense of these four countries, or, more properly speaking, at that of Great Britain. Consequently, on the 17th of April, a protocol was drawn up, stating that the novel position of Belgium and her "neutrality, acknowledged and guaranteed by France, would be such as required a modi-

fication of the defensive system adopted for the Netherlands kingdom : that the fortresses in question were too numerous for the resources of Belgium, and unnecessary for her defence as a neutral state ; consequently, that a part of these fortresses erected under different auspices, might henceforth be dispensed with."

This document was officially withheld from Prince Talleyrand until the 14th of July, and was not intended to be communicated to the Belgic government until a later period, but a demand for the production of papers relative to the Belgic question having been made in parliament, Lord Palmerston was unwilling that the first intelligence should reach the cabinet at Brussels through the ordinary public channels, and consequently forwarded the protocol to Mr. Lebeau on the 26th of July with a letter of envoy and explanation. After consulting the French cabinet, who dispatched the Marquis de la Tour Maubourg to Brussels in order to assist General Belliard and Sir R. Adair in conducting a negotiation eminently calculated to excite French susceptibilities, the Belgic government charged General Goblet to proceed to London early in September, on a special mission to the same effect. In despite of the numerous difficulties that presented themselves, a definitive convention was unanimously and cordially concluded on the 14th of December, by which it was stipulated that "the fortifications of Mons, Ath, Menin, Philippeville, and Marienbourg, should be demolished as soon as the entire independence and neutrality of Belgium was so fully established and guaranteed by the five powers, as to constitute an identical connexion between her and those fortresses."

The policy of this measure as severally regarded the contracting parties has been much questioned. Powerful strategical and political arguments have been ad-

duced to shew the danger of thus annihilating one of the proudest results of the Vienna treaty. These arguments, principally founded on the anterior condition of the Netherlands kingdom, would doubtless be incontrovertible, supposing the reconstruction of that kingdom, and the permanent union or amalgamation of the two people, were again possible. But without this, the object and advantages of preserving the fortresses must be completely neutralized. Firstly, as regards Belgium, their maintenance would only be a source of extraordinary expenditure during peace, and of devastation and permanent military occupation during war. They could only serve as objects of jealousy and discussion ; as a rallying point for foreign armies, and as an additional pretext for the adoption of various measures incompatible with the interests of a neutral state. In short, while they could in no way conduce to her defence, they might be instrumental to her subjection. For, supposing the aggression to come from the south, a French army could at any moment step in and take possession, many days before a Prussian force could arrive to garrison or relieve them ; whereas, supposing the inroad to come from the north, they might tend to maintain the theatre of war in Belgium, but could in no way operate as a protection. Secondly, it is evident under existing institutions that most of the latter observations are applicable to the northern powers, and that these fortresses, intended as a barrier against France, would now be an additional obstacle to her enemies ; for being placed astride on the great roads leading from Brussels to Valenciennes and Lille, their investment and possession would become indispensably necessary ere an army could attempt to penetrate into the department of the north. To mask or leave them behind, if well provisioned and garrisoned, would be too dangerous. To attack them would involve an immense

loss of time and life, and would most probably defeat the object of a campaign requiring the rapid movements that are essential to the success of all aggressive operations against France. It must also be remarked, that although they may be considered as forming an integral part of the French line of defence, yet, that not being actually within the French territory, their downfall would produce no moral effects in France, and would still leave the French triple line of strong holds intact ; while, on the other hand, their defence would give time for strengthening and arming these strong holds for concentrating troops, for organizing the national guards, and for taking other powerful measures to insure the integrity of the French soil. Whether France is equally interested in the demolition, is somewhat more problematical. If victorious, she certainly would require no extraneous addition to her numerous frontier defences. Moving with her wonted celerity, her generals would at once carry their arms beyond the Meuse and Rhine, so as to remove the theatre of war as far as possible from her own limits. But if unsuccessful, the very arguments that are prejudicial to the northern allies, are applicable in an inverse sense to France. On the other hand, supposing these fortresses to follow the inevitable destiny of all fortified places, if not relieved from without, their surrender would entail the loss of many thousand chosen troops, and they would then become eminently dangerous, by forming a point of support to an enemy in case of advance, and of retreat and refuge in case of defeat.

The convention relative to the fortresses having been carried on and concluded without the privacy of Holland, that power protested against this omission, in its note of the 12th of December, 1831 ; in which it declared that the rights of the king to co-operate in their negotiation were insured to him both by the barrier



system and by the 7th article of the treaty of London, which stipulated that this object interested the safety and independence of his whole kingdom. But this objection was over-ruled by the Conference. The barrier-system was declared to have become invalid—the eight articles of the London treaty were stated to be applicable to the Netherlands kingdom, and not to the two countries now detached and independent of each other, and it was said that the bulwark formerly derived by Holland from the barrier-system would be replaced by the neutrality of Belgium, without the expensive obligation of maintaining garrisons for the defence of the fortresses.

To resume—the Dutch and Belgic plenipotentiaries having received the necessary powers to treat for a definitive solution, the renewal of the negotiations placed the Conference in a situation of no ordinary embarrassment—embarrassments that could only be overcome by perfect unity and firmness; by the revocation of resolutions declared to be irrevocable; by construing various stipulations, in a sense essentially different from that in which they had hitherto been interpreted; by undoing the provisions of 40 protocols, and in short by adopting such a system as might have the effect of depressing the extremities of the two parallel lines on which Holland and Belgium had hitherto been moving, so as to form an angle of junction—no matter how distant. This was no easy matter, either as regarded the consistency of past reasoning, or the legality of future acts. The ground on which both parties moved, was so totally opposed as to offer no prospect of convergency unless the Conference boldly and unhesitatingly took the law into their own hands. For on the one side, victorious Holland insisted on the execution of the basis of separation according to the 12th protocol; while on the other, Belgium defeated, but not less tenacious,

demanded the strict execution of the eighteen articles, to which they had adhered purely and simply, and with perfect confidence in the good faith of the great powers. It was, in fact, this confidence in the assurance of the five courts which had solely induced Leopold to waive all objections, and to proceed forthwith to Brussels:—  
 “Will the great powers immediately recognize me,” said his royal highness, to the plenipotentiaries who had assembled at Marlborough house on the 12th of July.  
 “Will they recognize me if I proceed to Belgium without awaiting the adhesion of the King of Holland?”  
 “In despite of all” (*quand même*), replied Count Matuzewiz, “and in the event of his refusing, *we will discover means to compel him to consent.*”

Any attempt to reconcile interests so divergent as those of Belgium and Holland, or even to assimilate the two systems, appeared almost impracticable. As related to the question of limits, the basis of separation started by positively refusing the cession of Luxembourg, while the eighteen articles removed the *veto*, and suggested the possibility of exchange and compensation. As concerned the debt, the one, without regard to the commonest principle of equity, proposed a division in the proportion of  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; whilst the other, annulling these unfair propositions, established that division according to the origin and amount prior to and during the union of the respective engagements. The position of the litigants has been thus clearly and concisely defined by Mr. Nothomb. Holland exclaimed, “I will have my ancient boundaries, but I will not take upon myself the whole of my ancient debts.” Belgium said, “I intend to appropriate to myself a portion of the ancient Dutch territory, but will not be saddled with any of the ancient Dutch engagements.” Thus Holland demanded the division of territory on the basis of 1790,

and that of the debt on the footing of 1830. Belgium, per contra, called for the latter according to the footing of 1790, and the former according to that of 1830." These few words fully demonstrate the difficulties of the negotiations, and the false ground on which both parties founded their pretensions. It was as unjust in Holland to desire to impose on Belgium any part of her ancient debt, as it was in Belgium to claim any portion of the ancient Dutch territory. But as neither could be induced to abandon its claims, all that remained for the Conference was to seek for an intermediary process that might harmonize with the wants, though it fell short of the pretensions of both. To think of submitting to the exigencies of either, without endangering the repose of Europe, was chimerical.

After six weeks' mature deliberation, the plenipotentiaries came to the resolution of retracting the greater part of their former conclusions by assimilating the principles of limits and debt; that is, by fixing the *postliminium* of 1790 as the point of departure for both. This was less unfavourable to Holland than the eighteen articles, and more advantageous to Belgium than the 12th protocol. The result of this resolution was the treaty of the twenty-four articles, commonly known as that of the 15th of November, 1831.\* This important treaty, which has occupied so much of European attention, and which is destined to form the basis of Belgic independence, was accompanied by two prefatory notes, sufficiently indicative of the utter dissonance of the views and objects of the Dutch and Belgic governments, and the absolute necessity for the Conference to adopt its own line.

"The undersigned," says the first of these documents,

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\* See Appendix, No. 35.

“regret to find that there is no approachment between the desires and opinions of the parties directly interested.\* It being impossible, however, to abandon to further uncertainties, questions whose immediate solution has become a European necessity—compelled either to solve or to see them give rise to general war; and being fully enlightened upon all the points in discussion, the undersigned have merely obeyed a duty which their courts have to fulfil towards themselves as well as other states, a duty the more imperative, since all direct efforts at conciliation between Holland and Belgium have hitherto failed. In fixing the conditions of that definitive arrangement, the powers have only respected the supreme law of European interest, and yielded to the most imperious necessity.† In the conditions embraced by the annexed twenty-four articles, the Conference has only had in view the strict laws of equity. It has been actuated by an ardent desire to reconcile rights with interests, and to insure to Holland and Belgium reciprocal advantages, good frontiers, a territorial possession exempt from dispute, a liberty of commerce mutually beneficial, and an allotment of debt, which, resulting from an absolute community of charges and benefits, may henceforth separate these debts, less according to minute calculations, for which materials have not been furnished; less according to the rigour of treaties, than according to the principles of equity, which have been taken by them as the basis of every arrangement, and with the intention of relieving the burdens and promoting the prosperity of the two states.”

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\* Similar reflections were addressed to Barons Falk and Van Zeuylers de Neyevelde.

† The length, diffuseness, and even obscurity of the original has rendered curtailment and deviation from the literal language absolutely necessary.

The second note, which plainly shows that the Conference anticipated greater opposition on the part of Belgium than Holland : runs thus :—“ The five courts, reserving to themselves the task, and *assuming the engagement of obtaining the adhesion of Holland to the articles in question, even though she should commence by rejecting them ; guaranteeing, moreover, their execution*, and convinced that these articles, founded on principles of incontestible equity, offer to Belgium all the advantages which she is entitled to reclaim, are bound to declare their firm determination to oppose, by all the means in their power, any renewal of a struggle, which, having no attainable object, would be a source of great misfortune to both countries, and would threaten Europe with that general war, which it is the paramount duty of the five powers to prevent. But the more this determination is calculated to tranquillize Belgium, as to her prospects and as to those circumstances, that now excite vivid alarm, the more do they authorize the five courts to employ all the means at their disposal to insure the consent of Belgium to the above-mentioned articles, in the unlooked-for event of her rejecting them.”

It was on the 20th of October that this celebrated treaty was communicated, by the minister for foreign affairs, to the Belgic chambers, where it produced the most profound sensation of surprise and irritation. On the following day, Mr. de Muelenaere presented a royal ordonnance, countersigned by all the ministers, purporting that the king should be authorized to conclude and sign the treaty, but declaring in the preamble that it was *imposed* on the country. The project was ordered to be taken into consideration on the 26th, and, in despite of the clamours of the press and the exertions of the opposition, was carried affirmatively on the 1st of November, by a majority of fifty-nine to thirty-eight

in the lower, and thirty-five to eight in the upper house. Placed between the only two systems that governed Europe, having to choose between diplomacy and the sword, the Belgians wisely leaned to the former, and submitted to the sacrifices imposed upon them ; the most bitter of which was the abandonment of their fellow-countrymen in Limbourg and Luxembourg. In this pacific conduct they followed the good example of France, who had wisely renounced the hazardous glories of war, for the more durable advantages of peace. M. Van de Weyer, who had been charged by the king to support the bill in the chambers, having returned to London, the treaty, with three additional articles, was signed by him and the plenipotentiaries of the five powers, on the 15th of November. The unconditional ratification of the Belgic and French sovereigns bears date respectively on the 20th and 24th of November, 1831 ; that of Great Britain, on the 6th of December. But the courts of Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Vienna not having proceeded to ratify within the prescribed two months, their plenipotentiaries requested that the protocol of adhesion should remain open.\* It was not until after the failure of Count Orloff's mission to the Hague, whither he had been sent from St. Petersburg, with the view of obtaining the adhesion of the Dutch monarch, and after the no less unsuccessful efforts of the other two northern powers to overcome the king's resolution, that the Austrian and Prussian plenipotentiaries exchanged ratifications on the 18th of April, and that of Russia on the 4th of May.

The two former, which had been signed by the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, the one on the 7th January, and the other on the 18th of March, were accompanied by the following observations:—

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\* Protocol 55, 31st of January, 1832.

“That the treaty was fully approved, excepting the reserve of the rights of the serene Germanic Confederation as to such articles as regarded the cession and exchange of the grand duchy.” To the Russian ratification, signed by the emperor on the 18th of January, was adjoined the following reserve :—“We accept, affirm, and ratify the treaty, save and except such modifications and amendments as may be called for by the definitive arrangement between Holland and Belgium to the 9th, 12th, and 13th articles.” A reserve in direct contradiction to the formal declaration of the note of the Conference of the 12th of November ; for this note, resulting from the promise made by the Belgic ministers to the chambers not to give their adhesion to the treaty until they had obtained, or attempted to obtain, sundry modifications, stated, that “neither the spirit nor letter of the twenty-four articles could undergo any modification, and that it was no longer in the power of the five courts to consent to a single one.”

These ratifications being duly exchanged, the protocol of the 24th of May (No. 59) declared that the treaty of the 15th of November must henceforth be regarded as the invariable basis of separation, independence, and neutrality ; and that, while the Conference was resolved to spare no pains to induce the kings of Holland and Belgium to consent to a definitive transaction, “by which the treaty might receive full execution, they were equally determined *to oppose, by every means in their power, the renewal of hostilities between the two countries.*” This avowal was the more essential, as Lord Palmerston had been officially apprised by the Dutch foreign minister, that his sovereign had directed him to state “that the powers were at liberty to arm themselves against his measures or against his silence. That his majesty did not consider himself bound to advise them

of his intentions at the expiration of the armistice ; and even if he were so compelled, that many circumstances might arise before that period which might alter his intentions.”\* The tone of defiance and haughty contempt which the Netherlands government assumed, in regard to the Conference, not only betrayed its conviction that general war was inevitable, but afforded grounds for affirming that it was secretly supported and encouraged by some occult power. Even the final declaration of Count Orloff’s note does not appear to have removed the delusion, as regarded the first, however much it may be calculated in appearance to disprove the prevalent opinion of the insincerity of the cabinet of St. Petersburg. “Although his imperial majesty,” says Count Orloff, “will not associate himself in the employment of coercive measures, the object of which may be to force the king to subscribe to the twenty-four articles, he will not oppose any repressive measures adopted by the Conference to guarantee and defend Belgic neutrality, should it be violated on the part of Holland by a renewal of hostilities. Not being in the present conjuncture in a position to offer to the king of the Netherlands any more direct or useful proofs of amity and interest, the emperor leaves to the wisdom of the Hague cabinet the consideration of the consequences of a state of things that in his sincere and disinterested friendship he was desirous to avert.”

In despite of every remonstrance, the refusal of the Dutch cabinet was peremptory and unequivocal. The memoir, in reply to the note of the Conference accompanying the treaty, contained a formal protestation against the twenty-four articles, as being essentially opposed to the twelfth and nineteenth protocols, to which it still

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\* Protocol 50, 21st of August, 1831.



declared its resolution to adhere. This document, like all other state papers emanating from the same source, was remarkable for its subtlety and powerful dialectic, but utterly incompatible with the new order of things. It commenced by complaining of the violation of the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle,\* by the exclusion of the Dutch plenipotentiaries from the deliberations of the Conference; it declared that it was not inclined to participate in the pacific views of the great powers, or to abandon its right of renewing hostilities; and that the twenty-four articles, so far from insuring advantages to Holland, imposed sacrifices to which no independent nation ever submitted. After objecting to every article in detail, it proposed various modifications, which were in fact but a mere return to the annex A. To this communication the Conference replied by a memoir of considerable length and ability. In this it defended its conduct from the charge of violating the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle, by stating that although that protocol did expressly accord the right of participation to the plenipotentiary of any appealing power, it did not prescribe the forms of participation, and consequently left the Conference at liberty as to the mode of communication it might choose to select. It had, therefore, availed itself of this latitude by engaging the Dutch plenipotentiaries to expose their communications in writing. The memoir, after combatting each objection individually, proceeded to observe that the whole treaty was but the development of the "basis of separation" of the 27th of January, 1831; that the question of the grand duchy was sanctioned by the authority of the Germanic Confederation, in virtue of the resolutions of the Diet of the 9th of September, 1831, announced in its protocol, and this at the express

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\* 25th of November, 1818.

desire of the king of Holland. The concluding paragraph of this memoir, the greater portion of which is ascribed to the pen of Lord Palmerston, must not be passed over; the arguments it puts forth are no less logical than just. By the twelfth protocol it was settled that the Belgic sovereign should accept the arrangements resulting from that protocol; by the nineteenth, of which the Netherlands government invokes the authority, this acceptance was limited to certain fundamental arrangements—that is, to the territorial stipulations of the 12th.

“The letter addressed to the Conference by the Netherlands foreign minister on the 12th of July, declared that his majesty only had recourse to arms for the purpose of obtaining equitable conditions of separation, and that he treated as an enemy the sovereign that Belgium had elected, because that sovereign had not accepted those conditions which, according to this letter, were all founded upon the principles of the twelfth protocol and the dispositions of its annex A. Such being the engagements, and consequently the duties of the Conference, was it possible, without violating the faith of these engagements, to avoid the determination it had adopted? Could it act otherwise, when such were the declarations of the Hague cabinet? Especially as those declarations unequivocally admitted a change of sovereignty in Belgium, on equitable conditions; and finally, as the new sovereign of Belgium, in subscribing to the twenty-four articles, accepted the territorial and personal stipulations, which have been shewn to be conformable to the principles of the twelfth protocol, and the dispositions of the annex A.”

Between the 14th of September—on which day the Conference issued its fortieth protocol, relative to the exchange of prisoners—and the 4th of May, nineteen other

protocols saw the day. Of these documents, that of the 24th of September (No. 42), relative to Luxembourg ; and that of the 6th of October (No. 48), concerning the debt, are the most remarkable. These were the two great points on which the whole difficulty might be said to hinge. The first of these, while it admitted the adhesion of the Germanic Confederation to the negotiations for the cession of a part of the grand duchy, on the express condition that this cession should not include any portion of territory by which the line of defence should be altered to its disadvantage, formally protested, in the name of the Diet, against various acts of the Belgic government, as being essentially hostile to the principles of the thirty-sixth protocol ; and denounced the convocation of the representatives of the grand duchy, and the nomination of a military governor, as opposed to the authority of the Confederation. The principal points contained in the forty-eighth protocol, relative to the debt, having been explained in a former chapter, it would be superfluous to recur to that subject. Such is the rapid outline of the state of the negotiation, up to the period in question. It is time to return to King Leopold, and to offer a sketch of the arrangements adopted by him to shield the country from a re-occurrence of the disasters of August.

These disasters, which had fully brought to light not only the insubordination of the army, but the extreme dearth of officers capable of conducting its administrative organization, contributed to overcome the repugnance of the chambers to the employment of foreigners, and taught them to be more discreet in upholding the volunteer system, and in protesting against those measures of rigour without which all discipline is impracticable ; consequently, a bill passed the chamber on the 22d of September, by which the king was authorized to

take into his service as many foreign officers as he might judge expedient "for the duration of the war." In consequence of this, Generals Desprez, Evain, Bel-liard, Petit, and Gründler were ordered by Marshal Soult to place themselves at the disposition of M. de Brouckère, the Belgic war minister, in order to organize the respective departments of the staff, artillery, cavalry, and engineers; while several colonels and officers of inferior rank were either attached to these generals, or disseminated through the different corps. This measure was not effected, however, without exciting the jealousy and dissatisfaction of the nationals, who, although they had recent and deplorable proofs of their own want of organization, and were constrained to admit the inefficiency and demoralization of every branch of the army, could not be induced to acknowledge the absolute necessity of the measure adopted by the government. Indeed, to such extremes did they carry their jealousy in some instances, that on a French major being posted to a regiment of lancers, all the officers determined to challenge him; and it was considered prudent to remove rather than expose him and the corps to perpetual dissensions. The total amount of foreign officers of all countries thus admitted into the service amounted to about 350. The causes that led to this necessity have been explained elsewhere; it is not possible, however, to touch on the subject without noticing the tact and discretion of Marshal Soult in the selection of the greater part of the persons destined for this service. The reputations of General Evain, and the virtuous and lamented Desprez, are European. In the first, Belgium has made an acquisition which her enlightened monarch knows well how to appreciate; and when a premature death deprived the country of the services of the latter, public grief was only to be ex-

ceeded by private lamentation.\* At the period these officers arrived in Belgium, the state of the army could not be more deplorable—six months had not elapsed ere it presented an entirely new aspect.

General Defailly having resigned the war department, he was succeeded for a few days by Count D'Hane ; but this officer, who behaved with great gallantry at the affair of Louvain, having received a wound while riding at the king's side, Mr. Charles de Brouckère, who had replaced De Sauvage at the home department, consented to take the war portfolio, and to attempt the gigantic task which had baffled the exertions of his predecessors. Although this officer was deficient in experience, he was pre-eminent for his indefatigable application to business, his activity and energy ; and he, therefore, commenced the work of purification with an unflinching hand.

A new system of general organization was adopted. The undisciplined free troops were disbanded, and the men incorporated in the regiments of chasseurs. Some superior officers were superseded, and many subalterns dismissed ;† all staff officers were submitted to the ordeal of an examination. Those who possessed sufficient ac-

\* Lieutenant-General Desprez died on the 6th of August, 1833. Grief at the loss of a beloved wife, who preceded him but a few months to the grave, was said to have contributed to his death. Desprez left an only daughter, who was subsequently on the eve of marriage to Mons. de Baillot, an officer of the French national guard, who was killed in the Parisian riots of June, 1833. Madlle. Desprez has since married the Marquis de Dalmatie, son of Marshal Soult.

† "I will tell you more," said the minister of war to the chambers, upon discussing his conduct in regard to these dismissals ; "we have received from Holland several men condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The gates of the prisons were opened on purpose that they might come and ask for officers' commissions from us. It is to a colonel who had sufficient energy to make his whole regiment take a bath, that we are indebted for the discovery of the marks on the shoulders of some of those officers."—28th of September, 1831.

quirements were confirmed in their functions ; those who failed, were posted to line regiments, or dismissed. A military school, on the model of that of France, was established. The artillery was re-composed, and the number of guns in each brigade augmented from six to eight. A corps of sappers, miners, and a pontoon brigade was raised ; and 20,000 of the first class of civic guards were called out and disciplined. Two new regiments of chasseurs were formed from the disbanded volunteers ; the squadrons of cavalry were augmented from four to six, and comparative subordination was generally introduced. In short, ere four months had elapsed, new life was imparted to every branch of the service, and the army began to assume an appearance of amelioration that promised the best results. Even thus early in De Brouckère's ministry, a force of 45,000 bayonets, 3,600 sabres, and 80 field-pieces were ready to take the field, exclusive of the first class civic guards and reserve battalions.

To re-form a revolutionary army—to introduce discipline in lieu of insubordination, and economy and regularity in lieu of the grossest mismanagement and disorder :—to weed out the inefficient, and to replace them by more deserving men :—to raise an efficient force from the wreck of a chaotic mass, discouraged by recent disasters :—to establish a wholesome, but not exaggerated confidence, and to place the whole body on a respectable footing :—to treat with contempt the diatribes of the journals, the personalities of the opposition,—and, lastly, to pursue the line he had traced out for himself, in despite of anonymous threats and open insults, was a task that could only have been accomplished by a man of more than ordinary abilities and energies. The latter quality De Brouckère certainly possessed in an eminent degree ; but his naturally ardent temper and abrupt manners which he could not always control, combined

with the hostile intrigues of the ultra catholics, the petty jealousies of political adversaries, and above all, his bold efforts to purge the army of the many cankers that impeded its healthy constitution, raised against him a host of virulent and ungenerous assailants. Thus, no effort was spared, either in the chambers, through the press, and in the royal anti-chambers, to vilify and degrade him in public estimation. All, however, were constrained to admit that he had rendered important services to his country; that he was a man of no common abilities; that he possessed rare talents for administration, combined with a most ardent mind and zealous devotion to the interest of the service. At length, worn out with the virulence of his opponents, who dreaded his influence and talents, and were above all desirous to see him removed from court, De Brouckère gave in his resignation, and was succeeded by the French general of artillery, Baron Evain, who, having accepted letters of grand naturalization, was appointed "minister director of war," but without a seat in the cabinet.

It would have been no easy matter for the Belgic government to have selected an officer better qualified to undertake such a charge, than this honourable and experienced soldier, whose long and meritorious services had been fully appreciated by that great master of war, Napoleon, as well as Louis XVIII and Charles X. To an intimate acquaintance with all the intricate details of military economy, and an extraordinary facility of availing himself, in the most effective and advantageous manner, of the means placed at his disposal, Evain added a passionate fondness for business, great method and clearness, and a reputation of exemplary probity, combined with the utmost impartiality and mildness of manner. Indeed, this mildness might be said to have amounted to a defect; and it would have been better for

the interests of discipline had he possessed more severity and resolution of character. On coming into office, Evain acknowledged and ably profited by the judicious arrangements of his predecessor. The seeds that had been sown by the one, were rapidly brought to maturity by the other ; so that, in the course of a few months, the army, which had already made essential progress, was placed on a footing of great efficiency and respectability ; presenting a general total of effective combatants exceeding 72,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 122 field-pieces. Time and instruction were alone requisite to render this force equal in almost every respect to the finest continental armies.

In the meantime both De Brouckère and Evain had been ably and judiciously assisted by the king. His majesty daily worked for several hours with the minister and the chief of the staff, and made repeated excursions to inspect camps and garrisons. Divisions and brigades were frequently reviewed by him, and there was scarcely a battalion, squadron, or brigade of guns, of which he had not personal knowledge. This had the effect of stimulating the officers and encouraging the men, who now anxiously devoted themselves, the one to instruct, the other to profit, by the lessons they received.

If the army owed much to De Brouckère for its resuscitation and organization, and to Evain for his indefatigable exertions to complete that which his predecessor had so ably commenced, it was no less indebted to the talents and judicious arrangements of General Desprez, the chief of the staff. This accomplished gentleman and brave soldier held a similar situation in the African campaign. Moderate in politics, unassuming in his manners, intimately versed in the theory and practice of strategy on the most extensive scale, experienced in all the details of organization, combining a highly cultivated



and scientific mind, with undaunted courage and indefatigable activity, Desprez, with the assistance of the French lieutenant-colonel, Chapelié, soon succeeded in establishing an efficient staff, and, with the king's co-operation, gave that formation and consistency to the different corps that was best calculated for convenience, concentration, and rapidity of field movement.

In order to effect this, the whole force was divided into two armies—one “of observation,” the other “of reserve.” The active army consisted of five divisions, including one of cavalry. The reserve was formed of the sixth and seventh divisions; the former stationed in the Flanders, the latter in garrison at Antwerp and the neighbouring forts. The whole upon paper formed a general total of 117,000 men, including the moveable civic guards. The system of military divisions or governments was maintained: each province having its commandant, charged with the military police and distribution of garrisons.

The organization of the royal household, a subject of extreme interest to the domestic comfort and public character of the new sovereign, early occupied his attention,\* but he wisely resolved to adapt this, both as to extent and qualification, to the nature of circumstances, and the spirit of the times. In lieu of appointing a host of chamberlains and other of the ordinary appendages to a throne, he confined his nominations to a grand marshal, a master of the horse, a comptroller of the privy purse, and private secretary. To these were added four aides-de-camp, and two extra aides-de-camp, who being placed under General D'Hane, composed what was called the king's military household—and performed the

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\* It has been stated that the whole of the British establishment, excepting Sir H. Seton and a few domestics, were pensioned off in England.

functions of lords in waiting and grooms of the chamber. These officers having the emoluments of their respective grades, did not receive double pay; an example worthy of imitation in England, where staff officers are most improperly permitted to accumulate both regimental and staff allowances. The remainder of the royal household was formed on a similar footing, and with a strict regard to a wholesome but not unseemly economy.\* The rapid progress that was made, both by the grand marshal, Count d'Arschot, a nobleman eminently qualified by his courtly manners for the post he occupied, and by the master of the horse, Marquess de Chasteler, in their respective departments, kept pace with the exertions of the more important branches of administration, and was no less praiseworthy. For, until a few hours previous to the arrival of the king, not a single domestic was engaged—not a horse purchased; and, although a portion of the linen and porcelain of the former sovereign had been rendered available, there was neither plate, ornaments, nor any of the essentials to the splendour of a palace. The grand marshal and master of the horse were assisted by the experienced councils of Baron de Stockmar. To the talents of this faithful and enlightened friend, Prince Leopold had been indebted, not only for those admirable arrangements which rendered the Claremont household a model of comfort and splendour, without waste or extravagance, but for advice and consolation in the many trying circumstances in which his royal highness had been placed. Baron de Stockmar's advice

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\* The civil list fixed for the duration of the king's reign amounts to 2,741,340 francs. From this sum the king is bound to defray all repairs for the palaces at Brussels, Laeken, and Antwerp, as well as the expenses of his own cabinet.

was no less valuable when the prince was raised to the throne. His talents as a politician, and his profound knowledge of human nature, his integrity and noble disinterestedness, qualified him for the highest post in the king's councils; but, although the most pressing offers were made to him, he rejected every overture, and contented himself with the honourable but simple qualification of "the king's friend."

Discontented as the Belgians were with the treaty of November, that treaty had now become the political charter of the land—the narrow circle around which their diplomatic relations were destined henceforth to revolve. The Russian ratification, the least favourable of all, having stipulated that all eventual modifications should be effected by mutual consent, the Belgians insisted that no new negotiation could be undertaken without their direct participation. Their first condition, their absolute *sine quâ non*, was, that the treaty should receive a commencement of execution; that is, by the preliminary evacuation of Antwerp and the other Belgic territory. This was the groundwork of the minister's instructions to his envoys; instructions coinciding with the address of the chambers, and with the king's reply. In fact, this was the line of conduct pointed out by the Conference itself, which not only declared that, as the treaty was solemnized by the common sanction of the five courts, their duty was to look to its execution; but in their note of the 11th of June, 1832, they stated, in reply to the pressing solicitations of the Belgic government, that they were "engaged in urging the King of the Netherlands to bethink himself of the speediest means of evacuating the Belgic territory, of assuring the immediate freedom of the Scheldt and Meuse, and of establishing negotiations for the amicable arrangement of such articles of the treaty as

presented difficulties, *as soon as the territory should be evacuated.*" Thereby unequivocally sanctioning the demand of the Belgians.

Not satisfied with these pressing remonstrances, Mr. de Muelenaere again dispatched General Goblet on a special mission to London, with orders to unite with Mr. Van de Weyer in pressing the question to an issue. Consequently, on the 29th of June, a note was presented to the Conference, in which it was proposed, first, that "from the 1st of January preceding, until the final ratification of peace, the Belgian war expenses, solely resulting from the refusal of the Dutch, should be placed to the charge of that power, at the rate of three millions of florins per month; this sum to be deducted from the arrears of interest that might eventually be due to Holland." And, secondly, "that, as the Dutch government had not thought proper to evacuate the Belgic territory, or to consent to the free navigation of the rivers, the Conference should forthwith order the employment of such coercive measures as might be necessary to attain this object." The former portion of the demand, though founded on equity, was not admitted; but the embargo of Dutch vessels, the blockade of the ports by the combined squadron, and the siege of the citadel of Antwerp, were the result of the other.

A striking phenomenon, already alluded to in a preceding chapter, was the complete exchange of position between the two litigating parties. On the one hand, Holland as pertinaciously rejected the twenty-four as she had the eighteen articles, and replied to the solicitations and remonstrances of the five courts by proposing new treaties, by defying their armaments, by denying the competency of the Conference, and by protesting against the employment of coercive measures;

although, as late as August, 1831, she had eagerly coveted armed intervention, and defended her own aggression on Belgium, on the ground that it was the mere development of the coercive measures announced by the Conference. On the other side, Belgium, who had hitherto cast back the protocols, and protested against all forcible interference, now intrenched herself behind the treaty of November, and eagerly demanded absolute demonstration of force on the part of the powers. For a length of time these efforts failed, but De Muelenaere having given in his resignation, General Goblet replaced him at the foreign office, and by an artful stroke of diplomacy, succeeded in obtaining that which had been denied to the more rigid pertinacity of his predecessor.

The discussions attendant on this period of the negotiation produced the celebrated propositions, known as Lord Palmerston's Theme, together with eleven additional protocols. That of the 11th of June (No. 65) was the vehicle for six notes, the principal object of which was to overcome the resistance of the parties to that direct negotiation, without which all progress was impracticable. It was proposed to adjoin these supplementary articles to the original treaty, stipulating that the territorial evacuation should take place before the 25th of July, 1832; "that this evacuation being once effected, the two states should depute commissioners to Antwerp, to negotiate and conclude an amicable arrangement, relative to the execution of the 9th and 12th articles of the treaty; and that another commission of liquidation should meet at Utrecht, for the purpose of discussing a plan for the capitalization of the debt of 8,400,000 florins, charged to the great book of Belgium." The efforts of the Conference to bring the parties to an understanding proved abortive. Notes,

memoirs, themes and propositions, were alike unsuccessful. Like the buckets of a well, doomed for ever to pass each other, the one no sooner advanced than the other receded, alternating their position according to the impulse they received from the Conference. For the moment the Dutch cabinet consented to negotiate, their opponents receded; and no sooner did Belgium wave her objections, than Holland retracted, so that all chance of approximation fell to the ground. The paramount object of Belgium being to overcome the objections of the Conference to the actual development of coercive measures; this could not be effected, unless she should consent to negotiate, and the Dutch decline all direct intercourse. The final refusal of Holland at length gave the advantage to Belgium, who, on the 20th of September, furnished her envoys in London with full powers to treat directly. This might have been done with safety at an earlier period. The tenacity with which the Dutch cabinet persisted in clinging to the chimera of restoration, was a sufficient guarantee that they would decline direct negotiation, which would have been tantamount to a virtual recognition of that independence, which they had no intention to acknowledge.

The embarrassments that beset the path of the Conference were enhanced by various minor incidents, which threatened disastrous consequences. The most prominent of these were, first, the sudden seizure, by the Dutch, of Mr. Thorn, the Belgic governor of Luxembourg, who was detained during many weeks in the federal fortress, and after having been the subject of several protocols and remonstrances, was eventually liberated by command of the Confederation. The second was the constant infraction of the convention of Antwerp, arising from the construction and arming of

various batteries, which Chassé declared to be as dangerous to the safety of the citadel, as they were opposed to the maintenance of the *statu quo*. It required all the temper and ability of Sir Robert Adair and his French colleague, M. de Tallenay, who had continued to act as chargé d'affaires from the time of Belliard's death, to prevent the parties coming into collision. However, in despite of intervention and remonstrance, the Belgians continued their operations, and crowded the quays and ramparts with that formidable line of batteries which afterwards so powerfully contributed to check the aggressive intentions of the Dutch general.\* Such was the state of affairs up to the month of October.

In the meantime, a private negotiation, of vital importance to the consolidation of the new dynasty, and the domestic happiness of the monarch, was being silently carried on. One of the most ardent vows of the nation, indeed one of the principal accessaries to the king's election, was the hope of his selecting a daughter of France as the partner of his throne. This hope, skilfully put forward at the moment of discussing the eighteen articles, was about to be realized. Disappointed in not having been able to induce Louis-Philippe to allow his son to accept the proffered throne, the wishes of the people were directed towards his daughter. It was, therefore, with universal joy that the nation heard that the preliminaries of a marriage between the king and the amiable and interesting Princess Louisa of Orleans was about to be concluded, and that the day for the royal nuptials was definitively fixed. This ceremony

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\* The number of guns mounted on the ramparts, quays, and forts, susceptible of being brought to bear on the citadel and river, amounted to 69 mortars, and 150 long guns.

took place with every possible degree of solemnity at Compiegne, on the 9th of August, 1832. On the 15th, their majesties arrived at Laeken, and on the 20th following, they made their entry into the capital, where they were received with the highest demonstrations of loyalty and enthusiasm.\* This union was not only a political event of deep interest, but it offered one of those rare occasions when the vows of the people almost unanimously coincided with the inclinations of the sovereign. A new dawn of happiness—of that domestic happiness for which Leopold is so essentially qualified—again sprung up before him. The unaffected benevolence, piety, virtue, and many admirable qualities of this young and gentle queen, were sure guarantees that, if the cares inseparable from a throne should weigh heavily upon him, he would find a solace and consolation in domestic life. This conviction has been fully realized; for Europe can scarcely furnish an example of more perfect domestic enjoyment than that which has fallen to the share of this august and fortunate couple.

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\* According to the marriage act, dated the 9th of August, 1832, at 8½ p.m, the king, born on the 16th of December, 1790, was in his forty-second year; and the queen, Louise Marie Therese Caroline Isabelle, born at Palermo the 3d of April, 1812, in her twentieth year.



## CHAPTER XI.

POLICY OF THE BELGIC GOVERNMENT TO INDUCE THE CONFERENCE TO EMPLOY MEASURES TO OBTAIN THE TERRITORIAL EVACUATION—DUTCH MANIFEST AGAINST THE CONFERENCE, WHICH DECIDES UPON COERCIVE MEASURES—EAGERNESS OF THE BELGIANS FOR WAR—CEREMONY OF PRESENTING STANDARDS TO COMMUNES AT BRUSSELS—CONVENTION BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND—MR. THORN—EMBARGO AND SIEGE OF ANTWERP—MARITIME REPRIALS ON THE PART OF HOLLAND.

THE union of Leopold with a daughter of the house of Orleans not only diffused general satisfaction throughout Belgium, but was productive of important results elsewhere. These results were not slow in developing themselves in the conduct of the French government. And, in this instance, the private sympathies of Louis-Philippe according with the vows of the French nation, harmonized with the policy of the great powers.

In the meantime, the position assumed by the contending parties subsequent to the ratifications, was such as to raise a bar to all diplomatic progress. The one, as before stated, pertinaciously declined all further negotiation until the treaty of November should receive a commencement of execution by the evacuation of the Belgic territory; whilst the other consented to negotiate, but on conditions that tended to destroy the provisions of that treaty in all its most essential points.

It was evident, therefore, unless one or the other could

be induced to yield, that the mediatory task of the Conference must shortly terminate.

The situation of Belgium was, however, so precarious, and even disquieting to other states, that the friends of that country both in France and England strongly urged its government to emerge from the narrow orbit within which it had restricted its sphere of action. But, although its ministers were aware of the dilemma in which they were placed, and secretly admitted the policy of concession, yet they had pledged themselves too deeply to the chambers to admit of retraction.\* In order, therefore, to preserve their character for consistency, and yet not to raise an insuperable barrier to progression, De Muelenaere and his colleagues resigned on the 15th of September, and were succeeded by General Goblet. The ostensible object of the latter in accepting office was to open a direct negotiation with Holland, on the basis of Lord Palmerston's theme, which deviated but in a trifling degree from the November treaty.† But his real purport was to exchange places with the Dutch cabinet as regarded the Conference. That is, to induce the former to withdraw its offers to negotiate, and thus to cast the odium of delay on Holland, and thence to enable Belgium to demand from the five powers the fulfilment, or part fulfilment, of their stipulations; or, in other words, to overcome their repugnance to the employment of coercive measures against Holland.

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\* "The government will refuse to take part in any new negotiation, until the treaty has received a commencement of execution in all such parts as are not subject to negotiation, that is to say, that it will exact before all things the evacuation of the Belgic territory." *Speech of the Belgic Foreign Minister, 12th of May, 1832.*

† This theme, or project of treaty, formed the annex B to the sixty-ninth protocol.

The drift of this tactic was neither discovered by the Belgian public or Dutch cabinet. Thus the latter were the dupes of a manœuvre, which they might easily have turned against its projectors. For the virtual acknowledgment of Belgic independance, which would have resulted from direct negotiation, would not have entailed specific recognition, or vitiated those principles from which the King of the Netherlands had determined not to deviate ; whereas the *statu quo*, with all its territorial and financial evils, might have been continued, and the discussions prolonged to an indefinite period, and thus all the benefits that Belgium might have derived from direct negotiation would have been counterbalanced by the disadvantages of delay. But General Goblet's previsions were soon realized, and, for the first time the wary and veteran statesmen of Holland were over-reached by their less experienced rivals. For no sooner was Mr. Van de Weyer furnished with full powers than the Dutch cabinet drew back ; and upon the same day, the 20th of September, forwarded to the Conference a note of a nature so uncompromising as to render all approachment impracticable. This document first reclaimed the signature of the Conference to the treaty of separation, on the basis of the Netherlands notes of the 30th of June and 25th of July—that is to say, on conditions already declared inadmissible both by the plenipotentiaries and Belgians ; and then proceeded to declare “that the king would listen to no further concessions, that he declined the responsibility of all complications that might arise from delay, and loudly proclaimed that he would never consent to sacrifice the vital interests of Holland to the revolutionary phantom—that the free people, over whose destinies he was called to preside, confiding in Providence, well knew how to resist all that the enemies of public order and

the independence of nations might attempt to prescribe."

This species of manifest which seemed intended as an attack upon the principles and views of a portion of the Conference, and was so considered by them, was replied to by an explanatory memorandum on the 24th, in which the plenipotentiaries demanded categorical replies to certain questions, and hinted, that, as all means of conciliation appeared to be exhausted, nothing remained for them but a recurrence to other measures. Indeed, the tone now assumed by the Dutch cabinet was sufficient to undeceive the most sceptical. It was now evident that no propositions, however equitable—no basis of arrangement, however satisfactory to the five courts, that tended to replace Antwerp on a footing of rivalry with Amsterdam and Rotterdam, or to neutralize the territorial pretensions of the king, would ever be accepted by that monarch. The futility of all efforts to negotiate, unless upon conditions so favourable to Holland as were tantamount to the destruction of Belgium, was admitted by all who were not directly interested in protracting the solution of the Batavo-Belgic question. A question, that had held Europe in a state of suspense during two years, that had diverted statesmen from the pressing affairs of their own countries, and, baffling the ingenuity of the ablest diplomatists, had constantly menaced the repose of surrounding nations.

The question, however, was pregnant with intense difficulty and embarrassment to the great powers, and perhaps with some hardship to the house of Nassau, which was doomed to be sacrificed for the general good. But the necessities of individuals, and the ties of families, could not be allowed to weigh against those of states. The Duke of Wellington's administration had been the

first to recognize principles by which the people of France and Belgium became arbiters of dynasties. His successors and their allies had consecrated these principles, by acknowledging Louis Philippe, and by ratifying the treaty of November. By so doing, they probably arrested the further flow of democracy, and maintained general peace.

This policy was at once prudent, enlightened and in harmony with the general spirit of the times. It must be observed, however, that the decision, as regarded Belgium, was one of necessity, not of inclination; and that the choice, as it concerned King Leopold, was one of policy, not individual preference. Here again great discrimination was shown, for no prince in Europe was more essentially qualified for the task.

But if the necessity of elevating Leopold to the throne was imminent, the urgency of promptly placing that throne beyond the reach of accident was still more imperative. The revolutionary hydra slumbered, it was not crushed; every hour's delay tended to awaken one or more of its noxious heads. Procrastination enervated the friends of order, encouraged the partisans of anarchy, and threatened the most disastrous consequences to Europe.

From the moment of passing the eighteen articles, on the promise of whose faithful execution Leopold alone accepted the Belgic crown, the wisdom of firmly establishing that crown, and of awarding to his people the utmost sum of prosperity compatible with the general interests of Europe and the just rights of Holland, was self apparent. The revolution of September had annihilated the edifice erected at Vienna, and reversed the position of Belgium as regarded France and Europe. If, therefore, to regain what Europe had lost by the force of events, or rather by the impolicy and short-

sightedness of the Netherlands government, it was deemed advisable to acknowledge the right of insurrection, to abandon an ancient ally, and to erect a portion of his revolted kingdom into an independent monarchy, it was surely sound policy to consolidate the work by placing it in a state of security, and to accord such advantages to the people as were calculated to enlist their pride and interest in maintaining their young nationality against French influence or encroachments. England and northern Europe were as much interested in this consummation as King Leopold himself; unless, indeed, they desired that the labours, as well as the sacrifices of principles, alliances, and affections of the previous eighteen months should pass for nothing, and that the barrier of 1831 should be swept away like that of 1815.

To employ unsond materials in the construction of a dam, intended to resist any sudden irruption of waters, and thus to engraft rottenness in its very foundation, would be madness in a builder. The metaphor was applicable to Belgium; for the sovereign could expect no security, no durability for his throne, or in other words, for the barrier of which he was the key-stone, unless that throne rested on a solid basis, and unless his subjects enjoyed greater advantages under their new institutions, than they had previously possessed under the Netherlands government, or could obtain by a reunion with France. To effect this object, vigorous measures were not only necessary, but delay in their execution was dangerous. To expatiate on the urgency of the one, or the impolicy of the other, would be superfluous. It was clear that, without coercion, the Netherlands king never would renounce his pretensions or his hopes of restoration. Argument, mediation, advice, and menaces had been assayed, and had alike proved impotent.

The subject had been discussed to satiety. There was no point of view in which it had not been placed. Every experiment that diplomatic skill and impartiality could devise had been employed. Friends and foes had been equally repulsed. The fraternal intreaties of the courts of Petersbourg, Berlin, and Vienna had no more effect than the more earnest remonstrances of France and Great Britain.

As far as the king was concerned, this tenacity excited no surprise ; for, independent of the natural firmness of that monarch's character, he was seconded by able ministers, and skilful plenipotentiaries, who had hitherto watched and profited by the vacillations and irresolutions of the Conference. He was countenanced by the sympathies of every court, save that of France. He was confident in his army, navy, and strategical position, and was not only supported by the unanimous patriotism of his subjects, but encouraged by his partisans in Belgium, whose machinations and persuasions were multiplied in proportion as the decisions of the Conference were retarded. Besides, his majesty well knew that whilst all was concord and loyalty in Holland, distrust and want of union prevailed in Belgium ; and no where more so than in the chambers, where national objects were too often lost sight of in the virulence of personal antipathy. So marked was the contrast in this respect between the two countries, that it drew forth the following strictures from a member of the Belgic legislature. " Look," said the orator, " look at the Dutch, they are ready to make any sacrifice. The town of Amsterdam will come forward, if necessary, and place all its wealth at the king's feet, and the States-General consents to every demand of the throne. What will Europe say of us if we are divided, and do not maintain strict union with the government ?

That which constitutes the force of Holland is the union of the people with the sovereign. We also might be strong by pursuing the same course. If there be any enmity towards certain persons, speak boldly ; but remember, that all personal animosities ought to give way to the interests of our country.”\* But the dangers of internal troubles, and the many ills that attended the state of affairs so long existing in Belgium, were secondary considerations, when compared with the great European questions that the French and British governments were bound to balance and watch over. The momentary welfare of the Belgians ; the clamours of the press or people could not be permitted to divert the powers from the steady line of negotiation which was held essential to the maintenance of peace. To have hurried forward a precocious solution—to have attempted to coerce either Belgium or Holland, before the points at issue had been investigated to the very core, and before every method had been tried to bring the parties to an understanding, would have been as impolitic as to have delayed the adoption of coercive measures when all mediation had failed. “ The ripeness or unripeness of the occasion must ever be weighed.” That the occasion had arrived at maturity—maturity even to rottenness, could not be denied. No one attempted to gainsay this fact, or to refute the danger of further procrastination.

Admitting, however, by way of hypothesis, that the danger was exaggerated, and the state of Belgium misrepresented, there was a higher and more noble consideration that influenced the cabinets of St. James’s and the Tuileries. They had become willing sponsors of the new monarchy. They had deliberately and irrevoc-

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\* Speech of Count Villain XIV., 19th of November, 1832.



cably subscribed to a treaty. They had given to this important act all the solemnity of which royal and ministerial forms were susceptible. The honour of the respective kings' names, the good faith of the governments, and the dignity of the French and British nations were at stake. Both were bound by every tie hitherto held sacred, to look to the execution of a treaty which they had sworn to maintain. The Belgians had a right to claim the fulfilment of their bond, and the more so since it had been imposed upon them; and if England or France refused, they were justified in taxing them with a breach of faith, and to exclaim—

“If you deny me, fie upon your law!

There is no force in the decrees of Venice.”

“Let Belgium hold to her treaty, nothing but her treaty,” said one of the most enlightened members of the British cabinet, “and she must eventually carry the contracting powers with her. Let this be her sole ægis. She will gain more by firmly and tranquilly entrenching herself behind that treaty, than by all the clamours of her press and people, or by any warlike demonstrations, which can only tend to compromise her independence.” These predictions were speedily verified.

On the 1st of October, the Conference unanimously decided that forcible measures were necessary, although it differed as to the means to be employed. The three northern courts opined for pecuniary coercion; that is, for authorizing Belgium to deduct the amount of her war expenses at the rate of one million florins per week from the arrears due to Holland since the 1st of January 1832. But England and France peremptorily objected to a proposition, the tendency of which was to renew negotiations that the experience of months and the ad-

mission of the Conference itself had shewn to have become hopeless, and which merely served to delay the execution of a treaty, "the non-fulfilment of which exposed the peace of Europe to constant and increasing peril."\*

The unanimity that prevailed in the Conference as to the principle of coercion had thus been nearly disturbed by the difference that arose as to the mode of execution. But by the skill and temper of the negotiators, who were powerfully assisted by Lord Durham during his special mission at St. Petersburg, and from the fixed determination of the five courts to maintain peace, all difficulties were speedily overcome; and Russia, Prussia, and Austria, although they refused direct or indirect participation, consented to remain passive spectators of the physical measures proposed by France and England.†

The energetic course resolved on by these two governments received an additional impulse from two notes addressed to them by that of Belgium on the 5th and 23rd of October. After explaining the motives that actuated them in desiring to open direct negotiations with Holland, and declaring their conviction that all hope of conciliation had become illusory, the Belgic ministry protested against all further delay in the execution of the treaty, and peremptorily declared, if

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\* Protocol of the 1st of October, 1832, No. 70, by which the series of these documents was concluded; indeed, this may be said to have been the last public act of the Conference.

† A note was addressed on the 30th of October, by Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand to the Berlin cabinet, proposing that Prussia should take possession of those parts of Limbourg and Luxembourg destined by the November treaty to be adjoined to Holland, and that she should hold them in trust until that government should engage to fulfil the conditions attached to their possession. The Prussian government, regarding this as a participation in the coercive measures, declined.

the stipulated guarantees were not enforced, at least in part, that their sovereign would find himself compelled to appeal to arms. "It is on this condition," said the note, "that the existence of the new ministry depend.\* The evacuation of the territory must be effected by the 3rd of November, either by the action of the great powers, or by that of the national army." That was to say, that unless the Conference forthwith adopted measures to expel the Dutch from Antwerp, the Belgians were resolved to take the law into their own hands, and to commence a war whose fatal consequences no man could pretend to foretell. "This is an obligation," added the note, "that is imposed on the Belgic ministry by the internal state of the country, and by the force of events."

Such was truly the case. For although the principles of Goblet's, or rather Lebeau's, administration were essentially congenial with those of Casimir Perrier and Lord Grey, and consequently eminently pacific and conciliatory, yet they had no power to stem the torrent of national impatience. The reports generally current of a misunderstanding in the Conference, and a prospect of rupture between the contracting powers, had produced a most unfavourable effect. It discouraged the friends of repose; it weakened the confidence of the nation in the stability of the monarchy; it augmented the virulence and malevolence of those who were always ready to disseminate trouble and sedition, and who, either leaning to Dutch restoration or French aggres-

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\* It was thus composed:—

Goblet.....	<i>Foreign Affairs.</i>
Rogier.....	<i>Interior.</i>
Lebeau.....	<i>Justice.</i>
Duvivier .....	<i>Finance.</i>
Evain.....	<i>War.</i>

sion, were equally desirous to promote war. But on this occasion, these restless spirits did not stand alone. Civilians and soldiers, commerce and agriculture, press and chambers, alike cried out for the employment of force. Their present situation was indeed so vexatious, that a prospect of prolongation was insupportable. The immense sacrifices that had been made during two years, the apprehensions of a renewal of these sacrifices, and the approach of winter, united the whole country in one general cry for war.\* Their impatience was not only excited by distress and the fear of accumulating burdens, but by an ardent desire to wipe out the stain of their recent discomfiture. And they had some right to calculate on success, seeing that they had a well-appointed and efficient army exceeding 105,000 effectives, of whom nearly 70,000, with a numerous artillery, were disposable between the Scheldt and Meuse.† The general desire to have recourse to the sword was further inflamed by the ceremonies that were fixed for the anniversary of September, which epoch had been selected for distributing honorary standards to the different communes that had distinguished themselves during the revolution.

This imposing solemnity took place on the 27th of September. An estrade of exceeding taste and richness, surmounted with military trophies, was elevated

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\* The ways and means for the current year were estimated at 83,000,000 of francs, exclusive of the 17,000,000 annual interest due to Holland. The total budget exceeded 160,000,000, of which 76,000,000 were absorbed by the war department. The deficits were covered by loans.

† The Belgic army of observation was composed of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth divisions, with 104 field-pieces; the army of reserve consisted of the sixth and seventh divisions, with thirty-two field-pieces—the latter holding Antwerp, the former guarding the Flanders.

in front of the perystile of the church of St. Jaques sur Caudenberg. In the centre, under a dais of crimson velvet and gold, was placed a throne of state, flanked on either side with galleries for the queen and diplomatic corps. To the right and left of these were seats for the provincial deputations and public authorities. Beneath, and in front, arose a low semicircular amphitheatre, for the persons deputed to receive the banners ; each commune being distinguished by its respective device. Masses of cavalry and infantry lined the square and adjacent streets. An immense concourse of spectators occupied the intervening space, and crowded the surrounding buildings to the very roofs. The beams of a glorious sun glittering on the sabres and bayonets of the soldiers—the clang of martial music—the nodding of plumes—the waving of pennons and garlands—the shouts of the multitude, and the roaring of artillery, at once combined to add grandeur and animation to the scene.

The young queen, radiant with smiles and animation, arrived in state at mid-day, attended by the Duke of Orleans, and preceded by guards of honour and a body of one hundred sergeants bearing the colours awarded to the communes. When these had reached their allotted station, the thunder of cannon announced the approach of the king, who shortly made his appearance, on horseback, amidst the most deafening acclamations, intermingled, however, with shouts of “ War ! war to the Dutch ! ” Having dismounted and ascended his throne, his majesty assembled the provincial deputations around him, and after a short, but forcible harangue, delivered to each its destined standard, amidst a deep and imposing silence, interrupted only by flourishes of trumpets and the plaudits of the surrounding multitudes. The ceremony being ended, the royal procession

returned to the palace, and after a general review of the troops, the day terminated with banquets, fireworks, and illuminations. So eager, however, was the nation for war; so great was the state of excitement of all classes, that the king was not only urged by several persons who had borne a prominent share in the revolution, to give the signal for hostilities, but a meeting was held by the provincial deputations, for the purpose of drawing up an address to the crown, insisting upon a termination of all negotiation. A placard to this effect was posted on the walls and distributed through the city. "Belgians!" exclaimed this document, "let us avail ourselves of the anniversary of the memorable days of September, when so many brave men fell for the independence of their country. Let us avenge their memory. Let us call on the king to declare war without longer waiting for the interminable decrees of the Conference. War to Holland! Yes, war! The whole nation calls for it. It is the only means of saving our honour and securing our independence."

Being determined to avert a collision between the two parties, the result of which would have been an inextricable complication of affairs, Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand concluded a convention on the 22d of October, which they forthwith communicated to the other three courts, of whose passive adhesion they had already been assured.

This convention stipulated, "that France and England should forthwith proceed to the execution of the treaty of November; that the territorial evacuation should form a commencement; that the Belgian and Dutch governments should be required to effect this evacuation reciprocally by the 12th of November; that coercive measures should be employed against either government that had not consented before the 2d, and

that, in the event of refusal on the part of Holland, an embargo should be laid upon the Dutch vessels, whether in the ports of the respective powers, or navigating the high seas ; that a combined fleet should be stationed off the Dutch coast, and that, on the 15th of November, a French army should enter Belgium to lay siege to the citadel of Antwerp, and having executed the object of the expedition, that it should withdraw within the French territory."

In order to carry these measures into effect, a combined squadron, equally composed of British and French ships, was ordered to rendezvous in the Downs. The French division, commanded by Admiral Ville-neuve; the English, by Sir Pulteney Malcolm; the whole under the orders of the latter. The French army of the north, was also placed on a footing of concentration, and the ordnance department was directed to prepare a battering train, and stores necessary for the operations of a siege.\* It was on the 30th of October that the convention, which had been ratified on the 27th, was presented to the Belgic government by the envoys of England and France. On the 2d of November, General Goblet notified the consent of his sovereign to the evacuation of Venloo, and such other portions of terri-

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\* Orders were issued on the 10th of October to augment the battering train in dépôt at Douay from fifty to eighty-six pieces, according to the following detail:—

24-pounders.....	32
16 ditto .....	26
8-inch howitzers.....	12
10 ditto mortars.....	10
Pioniers .....	6

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The ammunition was directed to be prepared in the proportion of one hundred rounds per gun for fifteen days.—*Journal des Observations du Siège d'Anvers, par le Général Neigre.* Paris, 1834.

tory as were destined to be made over to Holland, on condition that his Belgian majesty should immediately obtain possession of Antwerp and the territory held by the Dutch. A similar summons was addressed to the Dutch government, but met with an unequivocal rejection. The result was, that the combined fleet proceeded to blockade the Dutch harbours, the French army was directed to hold itself in readiness to enter Belgium at the stipulated period, and by an order in council of the 6th, an embargo was laid upon all Dutch vessels in French and British ports.

These measures were not carried into effect, however, without exciting the sympathies and producing strong manifestations of disapprobation on the part of the commercial and mercantile interests in London. The embargo was considered so oppressive to Holland and so injurious to British trade, that a meeting of many eminent merchants and bankers was convened on the 13th, when an address was unanimously voted to the king, expressing "the utmost grief and alarm at the employment of the combined squadron against Holland, deprecating a war with that country as dangerous to the peace of Europe, and praying his majesty to postpone all coercive measures until the wishes of the nation on this subject had been ascertained in parliament."

It was evident that the framers of this address, however justified in stigmatizing the proceedings as injurious to their interests, were as ill acquainted with the character of the negotiations as regarded the contracting powers, as they were with the situation of affairs abroad; for, whilst they denounced the coercive measures as a commencement of general war, it was evident that these hostilities, or rather demonstrations of hostility, were intended, and did most probably avert that very conflagration which they so justly deprecated. The



risk of employing ships of war off the dangerous coast of Holland at that advanced season, the inconvenience to commerce, and the difficulty of establishing an effective blockade, were generally admitted; but although some inconveniences and risks were incurred, it was essential to enforce this measure, in order to convince Holland of the inflexible determination of the powers, and to prove to the rest of Europe the unanimity that existed amongst them; a measure of the utmost importance, not only to the consolidation of credit and confidence, but to the affirmation of general tranquillity.

The enforcement of the embargo six days earlier than the period prescribed for the reciprocal evacuation of the territory, was also adopted, in the hope that the Dutch cabinet, seeing the serious resolution of France and England, and the passive acquiescence of the other powers, would have complied with the summons of the 30th, and have thus obviated the necessity of deploying further force. The principles that guided that cabinet were no secret. They had been exposed in a striking manner by the foreign minister of the power of all others most friendly to Holland, in a memoir, of which the following is an extract, and which is the more worthy of observation, since it proves that even the court of St. Petersburg disapproved of the king's conduct:—"It appears proved to us, beyond a doubt," (*jusqu'à la dernier evidence*), said Count Nesselrode, "that the Netherlands government, far from having negotiated to establish a simple *administrative separation*, has constantly shown itself disposed to sacrifice its rights to Belgium, and to establish a *political separation*; that it has been solely intent upon rendering its recognition of the independence of that country and its new sovereign subordinate to its desire to insure for

itself equitable conditions; and that, if the Hague cabinet at present affirms and insists upon a contrary principle, this assertion is in manifest opposition with facts, as well as with the letter and spirit of its declarations both to the Conference of London, and to the assembly of the States-General of Holland.\*

It was, indeed, difficult to comprehend the policy or object of the king's resolve, especially when his majesty found himself abandoned to the united action of the two coercing powers. However chivalrous, however consistent with the hereditary constancy and patriotism of the Dutch character, this haughty rejection of the last overtures of the Conference might have been, it was impossible that its resistance could be productive of moral or material benefit; whereas concession, under such overwhelming circumstances, would neither have entailed an abandonment of principle, a renunciation of rights, nor a curtailment of national honour.

But it was determined otherwise. The enthusiasm of the Dutch people responded to the energy of the government. From the throne to the cottage, the whole population was animated with a firm resolve to imitate the example of Van Speyk, sooner than to surrender. The reserves were called out, and readily answered to the appeal. The volunteer corps eagerly flocked to join the active army. Dispositions were made for convoking the levy in mass, and the States-General unanimously applauded the conduct of government. Not only was the question of territorial evacuation rejected in a cabinet council held at the Hague on the 1st, but more

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\* Concluding paragraph of Count Nesselrode's memoir to the Emperor Nicholas, containing an analysis of the negotiations from the 4th of November, 1830, to October, 1838.—*Papers relative to Belgium laid before Parliament.*

than one member proposed that the threatened embargo should be regarded as a declaration of war, and that the active army should forthwith be ordered to attack the Belgic forces before the French could arrive to their succour. Although this dangerous suggestion was overruled, a cabinet order of the 17th directed, that all “French and English vessels should be ordered to quit the Dutch ports, and that the flags of those nations should not be admitted within the Dutch waters until the embargo should be raised in France and England.”

Orders were also transmitted to Chassé to complete his defensive preparations, and, in case of need, to protract his resistance to the utmost extremity. In order, however, to sustain the courage of the garrison, hopes were held out that a diversion would be made in their favour by the active army, aided by a Prussian corps, whose concentration in the Rhenan provinces was already announced.

This corps, which did not exceed 22,000 effective combatants, under General Muffling, assembled in virtue of the 46th protocol of the Germanic Diet, which denounced the act of physical coercion to be “a war between Holland and the two powers, tending to endanger European peace, and requiring precautionary measures.” Explanations having been demanded by France and England on this subject, the court of Berlin renewed its assurances of neutrality, and declared that the military movements in the Rhenan provinces were purely demonstrative, and intended for purposes of internal rather than of external security. This resolution was notified to the Hague cabinet, and renders the obstinate defence of the citadel and the useless sacrifice of life a matter of greater surprise. For here again the same moral and political objects would have re-

sulted to Holland, had Chassé been permitted to beat a chamade soon after the French batteries had opened their fire. Whereas, though France might have been spared the cost of a few thousand projectiles, and the loss of a few lives, she would have undergone almost all the inconvenience and expense attending the expedition, without reaping for her young army any portion of that honour, the attainment of which was one of the principal objects of Louis Philippe's government.

In the meantime, although the Dutch cabinet thus cast down the glove of defiance, it availed itself of the divergency of opinion manifested in the 70th protocol, to endeavour to renew negotiations through the medium of the Prussian court; in concert with which it drew up and adhered to a new project of treaty, which was forwarded to the Conference on the 9th. Independent, however, of the inadmissible character of the proposed modifications, the conjoint labours of the plenipotentiaries may be said to have terminated with their protocol of the 1st of October; and it was therefore declared, at least by France and England, that the hour for negotiation was past, and that submission to the summons of the 30th must be the *sine quâ non* of all subsequent approachment. Foiled in this attempt, the Dutch plenipotentiaries addressed themselves semi-officially to Lord Palmerston, and then to Lord Grey. But this step being regarded, not only as a deviation from the forms hitherto pursued by the negotiators, but as a mere cloak for renewing delays, the overtures of Baron Falck and Mr. Van Zuylen were rejected, and the coercive preparations were actively continued.

A private arrangement between the British and French governments had determined the employment of the combined squadrons. A formal convention between France and Belgium, signed at Brussels on the 10th of

November, regulated that of the French army. The principal stipulations of this convention were, that the auxiliary force "should not garrison any of the Belgic fortresses; that 6,000 Belgians should occupy Antwerp, but preserve the strictest neutrality; that the main body of the national army should concentrate on the right of that of France, and abstain from all aggression upon Holland; that the citadel and forts should be delivered over to Belgium, as soon as they should be evacuated by the Dutch, and that on no account whatever were these operations to be considered as offensive against the Dutch territory." It was attempted to impose the extraordinary expenses of this expedition on Belgium, but its government protested, and the claim was abandoned.

By one of those inconsistencies that so frequently characterized the proceedings of the Belgic legislature during this struggle, this act of coercion, undertaken at great risk and expense, for the sole benefit of Belgium, was loudly clamoured against by a large portion of the representatives. So long as England and France hesitated to interfere, the chambers were loud in taxing them with bad faith and disregard to treaties; and yet, when intervention took place, they were no less eager to express their disapprobation. In May a large majority had demanded territorial evacuation as a *sine quâ non*. In November they turned round, and stigmatized the execution as injurious to their country. At one moment the *statu quo* was declared insupportable; at the next they desired that matters should remain on their present footing; and, drawing courage, as it were, from the amicable dispositions of the two powers, put forth pretensions as inadmissible as they were exaggerated. In short, the ministry under whose auspices the coercive measures were brought to an issue, only

escaped condemnation on the 27th of November by a majority of forty-four to forty-two voices.\*

An animated debate on this subject took place on voting the address at the opening of the session. It was then argued, that any advantages likely to result from the evacuation of the citadel would be counter-balanced by the surrender of Venloo, and the stipulated portions of Limbourg and Luxembourg, the population and resources of which amounted to nearly one-twelfth of those of the whole monarchy.† That, although the Dutch might be expelled from the citadel, no guarantees would be given by them for opening the Scheldt, Meuse, and intervening waters, nor for fulfilling other clauses of the treaty, infinitely more essential to Belgium than the possession of a fortress, the siege of which would probably entail the destruction of the adjacent city. It was, above all, declared to be degrading to the national honour, that a population of more than four millions should require foreign assistance to make good its rights against a nation not much exceeding half that number, and this, too, with a well-appointed and efficient army, equal in discipline, and superior in numbers to that of their adversaries. An

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\* Mr. Lebeau and his colleagues immediately resigned, but from the difficulty of forming a new administration, they resumed their functions on the 16th of December.

† The population allotted to the respective states is thus divided :—

Holland :—	
Limbourg.....	175,000
Luxembourg.....	153,000
	<hr/>
	328,900
Belgium :—	
Limbourg.....	158,000
Luxembourg.....	157,000
	<hr/>
	315,000

The balance in favour of Holland is thus nearly 15,000 in round numbers.

order of the day announced to the troops their neutral destination, and, although this galling intelligence was generally submitted to with moderation and discretion, some superior officers were loud in expressions of discontent and jealousy. With an overweening confidence in their own powers, or rather with consummate disregard to the difficulties of the operation, they declared that the national forces were fully adequate to carry on the siege, and to protect the frontier from all aggression.\* These clamours were not heeded by the government, and the different corps immediately took up their destined positions; the left leaning on Turnhout, the centre on Diest and Hasselt, and the right watching Maestricht and the Meuse, with the grand head-quarters at Antwerp, and the reserves at Terveuren.

Whilst this important portion of the political drama was drawing towards a close, the liberation of Mr. Thorn, provincial governor of Luxembourg, whose case had furnished exclusive matter for the 60th, 62d, and 68th protocols, was effected through an act of vigour on the part of a Belgic functionary. Although Mr. Thorn's seizure had been declared by the Conference to be "an abduction, and an act of violence, disavowed by the ducal government, and disapproved of by the Germanic Confederation," and although the most urgent remonstrances had been made on his be-

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\* The population of Belgium, including the whole of Limbourg and Luxembourg, excepting the two fortresses, amounted on the 1st of January, 1832, to 4,122,000; that of Holland to 2,410,000. Supposing the treaty of November to receive full accomplishment, Holland will be augmented to 2,738,000, and Belgium reduced to 3,882,000. The annual increase of population, according to the learned Professor Quetelet, is in the proportion of 124 on 10,000 annually, or about 1¼ per cent.

half, the Dutch cabinet turned a deaf ear to every solicitation. Their plea for so doing was, that Thorn's detention was a reprisal for that of certain individuals who had been arrested by the Belgian authorities for attempting a counter-revolutionary movement in the grand-duchy.

The detention of these personages not only gave rise to much subtle discussion on the part of the Dutch, but was disapproved of by many sensible Belgians, both upon the ground of legality and policy. It was argued on the one side that, according to the treaty of which the Belgians demanded the execution, the captives were Dutch, and not Belgic subjects, since they belonged to, and had committed the alleged offence in that portion of the territory abandoned by Belgium, and which only awaited the ratification of the king grand duke, to become a part of Holland.

Besides, although they might not be considered as *bonâ fide* Dutch subjects, so long as the treaty remained unaccomplished, still the position of Luxembourg was exclusive and exceptional, and its inhabitants ought for the time being to be considered as appertaining to a neutral province, under the protection of the Diet, and, consequently, not amenable to the common law of Belgium. On the other side it was objected, that the treaty not having been ratified, nor any of its stipulations fulfilled, Luxembourg could not be placed on a different judicial footing from the remaining Belgic provinces; and, therefore, the prisoners must be considered Belgic subjects, and liable to the penalties attached to a treasonable attempt to subvert the existing government. Thus the Dutch, and indeed the Confederation, arguing upon the principle *de jure*, arising partly from anterior, and partly from repudiated treaties, made the release of these persons as the preliminary *sine qua non* to that



of Mr. Thorn ; whilst the Belgians, founding their arguments on *de facto* possession, were equally determined to send the captives before a jury. Although the Belgic government was strongly advised to liberate the prisoners, and thus to terminate an impolitic discussion, that only tended to complicate the general question, it persisted in its original intention, and the case went before the assizes of Namur, where the parties were acquitted. But, as these individuals had been subjected to the forms and risks of trial, and as judgment by default was issued against those confederates not in custody, the Dutch government declared that Mr. Thorn should pass through a similar ordeal.

The only chance, therefore, of obtaining the release of the latter, who had been confined since the 17th of April, was for the Belgians to effect some vigorous act of counter-reprisal. Chance soon threw into their hands a fitting hostage, in the person of a Mr. Pescatore, president of the grand ducal commission at Luxembourg.

Intelligence having been received of the intended passage of this functionary from the fortress to Treves ; an ambush was prepared ; he was seized on the 19th of October, and conveyed to Namour, where he was detained until a protocol of the Diet, of the 8th of November, put an end to the discussion by directing the exchange of the two captives, on conditions that all further pursuits and proceedings in the business should be stayed. These reserves were adhered to on both sides ; and thus, on the 23d of November, terminated an affair that had served during many months to embitter national hostilities, and to augment the embarrassments of the mediating powers.

Such was the state of the question at the period when the Conference terminated its collective labours, and intrusted to the energy of the sword the first commence-

ment of a solution that had hitherto defied the subtleties of the pen.

The term allowed by the Dutch for the territorial evacuation having expired, the French army, consisting of fifty-one battalions, fifty-six squadrons, and sixty-six field-pieces, entered Belgium on the 15th; and on the 19th, the advanced guard, under the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours, had already reached the vicinity of Antwerp. This force was subsequently augmented by thirteen reserve battalions and twelve guns, so as to allow nearly 30,000 effective infantry for the details of the trenches, independent of two covering divisions, thrown forward on the right and left bank of the Scheldt. The battering train, intrenching tools, and stores, whose dead weight exceeded 2,000,000 of kilograms, or about 2,100 tons, were embarked from the arsenal, at Douay, in fourteen vessels.\* Thence descending the Scarpe and Scheldt, they were conveyed to Boom, near the confluence of the Ruppel, where a sufficient quantity arrived on the 27th and 28th, to enable Generals Neigre and Haxo, directors in chief of the artillery and engineers, to report themselves ready for commencing operations.†

In accordance with the system pursued with its allies in all previous occasions, the British government dispatched a military diplomatic agent to the French headquarters. Lieut.-colonel Caradoc, who had distinguished himself on a similar mission at Navarino, was chosen for this service, and executed the duty with such zeal and ability as fully justified the selection.

An immense supply of gabions, fascines, and other en-

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\* "Journal du Siege d'Anvers," par le Général Neigre.

† This battering train of eighty-six pieces was augmented from the Belgic arsenals by thirty-eight ten and eight-inch mortars and nineteen cohorns, which, with six iron 24-pounders in Montebello, and the monster mortar, swelled the gross amount to 150 pieces.

gineer stores, having been prepared by the Belgic and French artificers,\* the various military arrangements being completed, and the diplomatic and local difficulties, as to the point of attack, being overcome, Marshal Gerard moved his head-quarters to Berchem on the 29th, and issued orders for breaking ground on the same evening. Although the weakest portion of the citadel fronts the Esplanade, it was decided, in order to deprive General Chassé of all direct pretext for bombarding the city, to confine the attack to the southern or external faces. Further, to prevent all possibility of collision between the Dutch and Belgians, the latter were withdrawn from the posts contiguous to the fortress, and their places occupied by 500 French. A convention regulating the daily relief and passage of this detachment through the Malines-gates, as well as the occupation of the lunette Montebello by the French artillery, was concluded between General Buzen the Belgic governor, and the French marshal. The occupation of this advanced work, which it is difficult to consider in any other light than as appertaining to the body of the place, gave rise to urgent and just remonstrances on the part of General Chassé, "who denounced it as an infraction of the neutrality of the city and threatened retaliation, unless it was abandoned."\*

But these menaces passed unheeded by the besiegers, who were fully convinced that the Dutch general would rather submit to this infraction than molest the city, by which he would not only have brought on himself the overwhelming fire of seventy additional mortars and

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\* Some idea of the superabundance of these may be formed from the fact that those remaining after the siege were purchased by the Belgic government for 44,000 francs; part of which were re-sold, and the rest employed in restoring the dykes near Burcht.

† *United Service Journal*, No. 52, March, 1833.

as many heavy guns, but have subjected his garrison to fearful reprisals, and his government to the severest moral and financial retribution. Indeed, General Chassé in his official report of the 10th of December, candidly avowed himself fortunate in securing the neutrality of the city “as in a contrary case, the flotilla and *Tête de Flandre* would have been soon destroyed by the superior fire of the enemy’s artillery.”

Owing to the unfavourable state of the weather and other local frictions, the troops destined for the first night’s duties, consisting of eighteen battalions, 900 artillery, and 500 sappers, led on by the Duke of Orleans in person, were unable to commence work before nearly two A. M. on the 30th. Nevertheless, the first parallel extending from Montebello on the right, to beyond the Kiel road on the left, a distance of 1800 yards, with coffers for nine gun and four mortar batteries, was in such a state of progression by day-light, as to afford ample shelter for the working parties, who proceeded thus far without molestation from the garrison. But the summons addressed by Marshal Gerard to General Chassé, soon after dawn, having been peremptorily rejected, the Dutch artillery opened their fire at mid-day, and maintained it until the last moment of the siege, with a degree of precision and steadiness that reflected the highest honour on the officers and soldiers of that arm.

Having described the offensive means at the disposal of the assailants, it is necessary to offer a brief sketch of the defensive powers of the besieged. On the morning of the 30th of November, the citadel, with the lunettes St. Laurent and Kiel, were held by about 4500 men, with an abundant supply of provisions, ammunition, and 134 pieces of cannon of different calibre.\* The

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\* At the expiration of the siege there remained 150,000 lbs. of powder, 12,000 shells, 11,500 round shot, 1,000,000 cartridges, 5,237

Tête de Flandre, forts Burcht, Zwynndrecht, and Austrowiel, were garrisoned and armed by about 500 men, and twenty-seven pieces; whilst eleven gun-boats and two steamers, manned by nearly 400 seamen and marines, were anchored in the river. The whole of the polders, or low marshy lands, contained within the angle formed by the Scheldt, from the village of Burcht above, to the Pipe de Tabac below Antwerp, were inundated by perforations in the dykes, and thus secured these forts, the flotilla, and citadel from all molestation on the left bank. Although the corporeal infirmities of General Chassé deprived his troops of the active superintendence of their commander, he was ably seconded by Major-general Fauvage, by Colonel Gumoens, and by Lieut.-colonel Selig, commanding the artillery, to whose exertions and that of his brave cannoniers the honourable and prolonged resistance must be mainly ascribed. These were powerful resources; but, on the other hand, the casemates and bomb proofs were ill ventilated, and utterly disproportioned to the shelter of a garrison double that prescribed by the ordinary rules of defence, and who were consequently jammed together in the narrow passages, or crowded beneath the damp and unwholesome posterns, where they suffered as much from inaction as from want of space. The barracks, hospitals, and other blinded buildings were totally inadequate to resist, and indeed soon yielded to the overwhelming mass of fire incessantly poured upon them. The sufferings of the people were thus intense. But that which contributed mostly to incommode the troops was the want of good

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muskets, and 114 pieces of serviceable artillery. It may here be mentioned that the total estimate of trenches, batteries, &c. thrown up by the besiegers, amounted to 14,000 metres, or about 8½ miles English.

water, for the wells and tanks being for the most part out of order, the supply was not only limited but brackish, unwholesome, and scarcely potable without an admixture of acids.

To return to the attack. The difficulties encountered by the besiegers, from the swampy nature of the soil, especially on the left, were such as to retard the completion or rather arming of the batteries. But these obstacles having been overcome, twenty mortars, twenty eight-inch howitzers, with thirty twenty-four and sixteen pounders, opened their converging fire upon the devoted fortress at eleven A.M., on the morning of the 4th. This powerful projective force was subsequently increased by twenty-eight mortars, six pierriers, sixteen cohorns, and the twenty-four-inch or monster-mortar; giving a total of 138 pieces simultaneously employed.\*

Whilst these events were passing before the citadel, the Dutch fleet, consisting of one frigate, two corvettes, two armed steamers, one bomb vessel, and twenty gun-boats, attempted to force its way upwards by forts la Perle and St. Mary; but after a sharp skirmish, in which the Dutch admiral lost his life, they were repulsed by the covering division on the left bank. With the exception of a later and equally fruitless endeavour

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\* An "order of the day" of the 4th directed that the fire should slacken during the night, and be entirely confined to hollow projectiles. The fire of round shot was limited to sixty, that of howitzers to forty, and that of mortars to thirty rounds per day, giving a daily computed expenditure of 2,600 of the first, 800 of the second, and 1,200 of the last, or a general total of 88,760 rounds for the nineteen days. But, according to the tables published in Lieutenant-general Neigre's narrative, the total general consumption did not exceed 64,572; consequently the daily expenditure was only 3,400, or nearly one-quarter less than that prescribed by the order in question. The total consumption of powder was 136,678 killograms. In the *United Service Journal*, No. 54, will be found a detailed description of the monster-mortar, the shell of which weighed 1,000 lbs.

to land a body of troops, with the view of cutting the dykes, and inundating the polders near Doel, no further effort was made to interrupt the siege. Indeed, when the neutrality of Prussia, and the great superiority of the French and Belgian armies is considered, it would have been the height of rashness, on the part of the Prince of Orange, to have attempted any aggressive movement. A disposable force of 11,000 cavalry, 90,000 infantry, and nearly 200 field-pieces were too powerful odds to offer any prospect of success to an army not averaging more than half that number.

The general project being to concentrate the attacks on the Toledo Bastion, the left face of which was destined to be breached, it was necessary to silence the fire of the ravelin on its right, and to obtain possession of the lunette St. Laurent. This latter operation was not effected until the night of the 13th, after nearly fifteen days' open trenches. This insignificant outwork might doubtless have been carried at a much earlier period had time been any object; but, under existing circumstances, a *coup de main* would not only have entailed a wanton expenditure of life, but it would have deprived the French engineers of an opportunity of practising the more efficacious and less sanguinary process of descent, mine, and passage of the ditch. This operation, of rare occurrence in modern sieges, was skilfully executed, and attached a much greater celebrity to the assault of St. Laurent than it would otherwise have merited.\* This fall of the outwork having removed one of the principal obstacles to the progress of

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\* The garrison did not exceed 120 men, the half of whom fled upon the springing of the mine, and the rest threw down their arms. One long 12-pounder, one 6½-inch howitzer, and two or three cohorns were its projective defences.

the approaches, the attack was carried on with increased vigour. The glacis having been crowned, and the breaching and counter-batteries, each for six twenty-four pounders, having been armed on the night of the 20th, their embrasures were unmasked at sun-rise on the 21st, and their fire maintained with such effect during that and the following day, as only to require a few hours to ensure an easy and practicable breach. The miners having simultaneously carried the two descents *à ciel couvert* down to the level of the water, the counterscarp of the Toledo Bastion being pierced, and the material for forming the passage of the ditch prepared, the batteries re-opened at day-break on the 23d. At eight o'clock, however, a flag of truce with offers of surrender presented itself at the outposts, and was conducted to the French quarters at Berchem, when a capitulation *ad referendum* was drawn up, and at ten A.M. hostilities ceased on both sides, after twenty-four nights' open trenches, and nineteen days' open batteries on the part of the besiegers; and twenty-three days' unremitted fire on that of the besieged. On the 24th the Dutch garrison marched out with the honours of war, and having laid down their arms at the foot of the glacis, returned into the citadel to await the decision of the Netherland's cabinet as to the capitulation.† But the latter having refused to evacuate Lillo and Liefkenshoek, or to permit the Dutch troops to return home on *parole*, it was determined to convey them to France as prisoners of war. This was effected on the

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\* The detail of prisoners that surrendered by capitulation was—citadel, 3,926, including 129 officers; forts, 467; sick and wounded, 550; seamen and marines, 382—total, 5,325. The loss of the garrison in killed, wounded, and missing, was 561; that of the besiegers, including 109 from the covering divisions on the left bank, 850.



29th and 31st. On the 1st of January the citadel, which had been taken possession of by the French, was delivered over to the Belgians.

Thus terminated an enterprise that stands without parallel in the military and diplomatic anomalies of nations, and which had all the menacing attributes of war, without causing the slightest interruption to peace. An enterprise, where on one side a gallant garrison was sacrificed by their sovereign to the fruitless maintenance of a political principle, without prospect of benefit to their own country or of detriment to its enemies; where, on the other, the laurel and the olive were so blended in the chaplets of the victors, that they themselves seemed to smile at the recompences that were lavished upon them, for a service so far beneath their valour and immense resources; so widely different, in its object and mode of execution, from the rapid, hazardous, and brilliant achievements that immortalized the republican and imperial arms. Still more strange was it to see all northern Europe compelled, by the force of events, to stifle their jealousies and sympathies, and to entrust the chastisement of a near and dear ally to those for whom they entertained neither confidence or amity—to those, whose cannon had never before resounded within the Belgic frontier, without arousing the echo of war from the banks of the Meuse and Rhine to the shores of the Danube and the Neva. It seemed as if the powers of Europe, and even Holland herself, were desirous to increase the popularity of the new French dynasty, by affording to Louis Philippe an occasion for exercising and decorating the unscarred bosoms of his young troops, and to his gallant sons an opportunity of wetting their willing but virgin swords.\*

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\* Amongst the honorary recompences bestowed on the French troops were 392 crosses of the Belgic Leopold Order, which order had

The scene that passed on the banks of the Scheldt, in December, 1832, might be likened to one of those bloody pageantries that were once of trite occurrence upon the borders of the Tiber ; where the mock game of war was played upon a scale of fearful theatrical grandeur, and where the bleeding bodies of the captive Gaul or Dacian were relentlessly immolated to slake the pampered thirst for amusement of semi-barbarous Rome.\* In this instance, the citadel was the arena, the Dutch and French were the gladiators, and civilized Europe the spectators. The issue was perhaps more bloody, but the sacrifice was not less wanton.

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been founded by the king on the 11th of September, 1832. The first person to whom this cross was accorded, and that by the king of the Belgians in person in the trenches, was a private sapper who had been dangerously wounded. A nobler occasion, or a more fitting person, could not have been selected.

\* The simile is the more justifiable from the fact that the roof of the theatre at Antwerp was the resort of spectators, who were thence enabled to witness the operations. Strangers were invited to this novel spectacle by the following advertisement :—" *Notice ! The public is informed that places may be procured at the " Théâtre des Variétés for seeing the siege."*

## CHAPTER XII.

THE FRENCH ARMY WITHDRAWN FROM BELGIUM—RESULT OF THE EXPEDITION—NEGOTIATIONS RENEWED BY LORD PALMERSTON AND PRINCE TALLEYRAND—PROJECT OF THE CONVENTION—COUNTER-PROJECTS — NEGOTIATIONS INTERRUPTED—DUTCH CABINET ORDER OF THE 17TH NOVEMBER ENFORCED—MR. VAN ZUYLEN RECALLED—MR. DEDEL ARRIVES IN LONDON—PROPOSITIONS OF THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT—CONVENTION OF THE 21ST MAY—EMBARGO RAISED—PRISONERS RESTORED—NEGOTIATIONS FINALLY INTERRUPTED—CONVENTION OF ZONHOVEN—LUXEMBOURG QUESTION—GENERAL DIPLOMATIC POSITION—SITUATION OF BELGIUM, FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL—CONCLUSION.

OF all the groundless assertions and sinister predictions that attended the execution of coercive measures, not one was verified. On the contrary, twenty-four days' open trenches sufficed to subdue the citadel, without injury to the city. Russia, Prussia, and Austria remained passive spectators of an enterprise executed in support of a treaty to which they were contracting parties. The union between the British and French cabinets was strengthened without enfeebling their good understanding with other courts. With the exception of a fruitless attempt to destroy and inundate a few farms, the Dutch made no effort to succour their countrymen. No sooner had the French army placed the fortress in the hands of its legitimate proprietors, than it retired forthwith; thus affording a striking proof of the disinterestedness and good faith of Louis-Philippe, and giving him additional titles to the support of England and the confidence of the northern powers. Peace, the

paramount object of every effort, having withstood this severe shock, was more firmly established; and a unanimous vote of the Belgic chambers accorded a sword to the commander, and thanks to that army, whose entry into the country had been stigmatized as the result of a deplorable system of policy, and pregnant with evil to Belgic interests.

The moral benefit derived by Belgium from the emancipation of her first commercial city, and the prospect of the speedy re-opening of the Scheldt, was great; the strategical advantages, equally so. With the exception of Lillo and Liefkenshoek, which had little influence upon the navigation of the river, since vessels must pass under the guns of Flushing, Batz, &c., Belgium obtained full possession of the whole of her territory on both banks. From the inconceivable policy of the Dutch in retaining Lillo and Liefkenshoek, a policy that fully justified the speculations of the Belgic government, the latter was liberated from the necessity of delivering up Venloo, Limbourg, and Luxembourg. The left flank and even rear of her army of observation, hitherto menaced by the citadel and fleet, was completely unshackled, and the communications between the two banks were opened, as far as La Croix and the St. Anna Polder; and the forts placed in such a state of defence as to defy the most powerful marine.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the military position of Belgium is less favourable than that of her antagonist, whether considered offensively or defensively. For were the latter to be the aggressors, and should success attend their arms, there is no serious obstacle between them and Brussels, no strong position to the south of the Nethes, where an army could rally after any signal overthrow; the positions of the Dyle and Demer being easily turned by the roads from Tongres,

Jodoigne and Wavre.\* On the other hand, supposing the Belgians to be victorious, they could not penetrate more than two marches into N. Brabant, without falling upon Bergen-op-Zoom, Breda, Bois-le-Duc, and Tilbourg, or being arrested by the inundations which either cover or are prepared to overspread the whole intervening country between these places and the Moerdyck. But the neutral position assigned to Belgium render these disadvantages of less importance.

Although the refusal of the Netherlands cabinet to abandon Lillo and Liefkenshoek was doubtless advantageous to Belgium, it was highly embarrassing to France and England, since it rendered it impossible to discontinue maritime coercion without acting against the letter and spirit of the convention of October; the sole object of which was to effect the complete territorial evacuation. So long as any of the causes that produced that convention continued to exist, it was evident that the convention itself must remain in full vigour, and that the embargo and blockade arising from it could not be removed, without an abandonment of serious resolves and a virtual acknowledgment of their injustice and impolicy.

Such, however, was the inconvenience to British commerce, and such the general repugnance not only of the mercantile world, but of the English and French governments to the prolongation of these measures, that the intelligence of the fall of Antwerp had scarcely reached London ere an attempt was made by Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand to renew negotiations. With this view a project of convention was drawn up and forwarded to the Hague, on the 30th of

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\* It is intended to protect this frontier by erecting a fortress at Zamel, and to fortify other points, including Lierre, Diest, and Hasselt.

December. In this, the release of the Dutch prisoners and the cessation of the embargo were offered in exchange for the evacuation of Lillo and Liefkenshoek, the re-opening of the Scheldt, and one or two other stipulations of minor importance. This overture was met by a counter-project of the 9th of January, 1833, in which, whilst the Dutch government consented to the principle of territorial evacuation, it proposed to impose a toll both upon the navigation of the Scheldt and the transit into Germany, and demanded the annual payment by Belgium of the 8,400,000 interest of debt. But, before this document reached its destination, the negotiations were again interrupted by the enforcement of the Dutch cabinet order of the 17th of November.

The state of warfare within the Scheldt had hitherto rendered this act a mere dead letter, as regarded the port of Antwerp; but hostilities had no sooner ceased before the citadel, than its effects were essayed on two Austrian merchant vessels, the *Roleslaw* and *Prince Metternich*; more, perhaps, with the view of feeling the pulse of the five powers, than with any serious intention of interfering with the ships of neutral or non-coercing nations. The first of the two vessels alluded to, having attempted to proceed seawards, was brought to by the Dutch guard-ship at Lillo and compelled to retrace its steps. The second, inward-bound, was boarded at Flushing, and thence escorted to the limits of the Belgian waters, but not until the master had engaged himself "to pay the amount of such duties on his cargo as might afterwards be demanded in the event of Belgium consenting to the imposition of a toll."\* This incident, which was not only of vital importance to general navigation, but in direct violation of the treaties that gua-

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\* Extract from the log of the master of the *Prince Metternich* Austrian merchant brig, 10th of January, 1833.

ranted the freedom of the Scheldt, was immediately communicated to the French and English governments, by whom explanations were demanded of the Hague cabinet.

To this the Dutch foreign minister replied, that "the recent measures enforced against Holland being in opposition to the principles laid down by the ninth protocol, by which the liberty of navigating the Scheldt was rendered contingent on the cessation of hostilities on all sides, the Netherlands government had determined upon the expulsion and non-admission of French and English vessels, as an act of reprisal. But although navigation was interrupted for the ships of those two nations, it would remain unimpeded for all others; for it was not until the Dutch flag had been repelled from the upper Scheldt that analogous measures had been adopted by Holland in the lower. Nevertheless, however well entitled the court of the Hague might be to close the Scheldt for the present, it would not avail itself of the rights reserved by its declaration of the 25th of January 1831, but would endeavour to conciliate them with the interests of navigation and commerce. Therefore, whilst the king was resolved not to renounce these or other rights vested in him by the ninth protocol (meaning the supposed right of establishing a toll), he would not object to the temporary freedom of the Scheldt, on condition that his troops were liberated, and the coercive measures discontinued. But until this should be effected, the dispositions emanating from the cabinet order of the 17th of November would continue in force as far as regarded France and England."\*

Although this note gave an interpretation to the twelfth clause of the ninth protocol, which it was not

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\* Despatch of Baron Verstolk van Scelen, 25th of January, 1833.

intended to convey, it was interpreted satisfactorily by France and England, as showing that the Dutch had adopted counter-coercive measures as a temporary and exceptional act of reprisal, and not with the intention of definitively infringing the treaties that secured the freedom of general navigation. This view of the case was further corroborated by the arrival at Antwerp of several neutral, and indeed of many Belgian vessels under neutral colours, without other hinderance than a simple visit of formality at Flushing. The negotiations were therefore renewed, and a few days produced four projects and counter-projects, which, failing in their purpose, were resumed in a note addressed by Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand to Baron Van Zuylen, on the 14th of February.

It resulted from this able and lucid document that, if there had existed any serious disposition on the part of Holland to terminate the matter in dispute, she might have availed herself of the propositions of the two powers without compromising any of her interests. For all that was demanded was, that the territorial question should remain in *statu quo*, both parties retaining, for the time being, the territory actually in their possession ; that a formal armistice should be concluded without other special guarantee for the maintenance of peace or disarmament than the acknowledgment of Belgic neutrality ; and lastly, that the Meuse and Scheldt should be re-opened, the former on the basis of the convention of Mayence, and the latter on the same footing on which it had existed from January 1831 to November 1832.\* In return for this, maritime coercion was to be discontinued, and the Dutch troops to be conveyed home with arms and baggage.

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\* The convention of Mayence, ratified on the 31st of March 1831, regulates the tonnage and navigation duties on the Rhine.



Although these propositions prejudiced no ulterior question, and imposed no definite conclusion, "but were calculated to procure immediate relief both to Holland and Belgium, and contained such sureties for the maintenance of peace as might lead to a direct and definitive arrangement," they were met by counter-projects of a character "inadmissible as to their contents and objectionable from their omissions."\* For whilst the Dutch demanded the cessation of the embargo and the liberation of the prisoners, they proposed to subject all vessels to the payment of tonnage duties, and to consequent search and detention at Batz or Flushing, without offering any guarantee for the pilotage or buoying of the Scheldt waters, or the re-opening of the Meuse. And this, although no such toll had been previously levied except during a short time in 1814, between the expulsion of the French from the Netherlands and the treaty of Paris, when it could only be considered as an arbitrary act on one side, and as an oversight on the other, no ways intended to serve as a precedent. For whatever pretension Holland might have had to revive any portion of the barrier system, by inflicting toll or search, this pretension had never been recognized by the great powers; indeed, it had been formally disavowed by the treaty of Vienna and the secret treaty of the same epoch, by which the king of the Netherlands engaged himself, his heirs and successors, to maintain the liberty of the Scheldt.

The demand for the annual payment of 8,400,000 florins was no less exceptionable. For it was evident that a portion of this charge was imposed on Belgium, not as an equivalent for past benefits, but as part of a future and general arrangement; whence she was to

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\* Note of the 14th of February, 1833.

derive divers subsequent commercial advantages. This matter was clearly defined by the forty-eighth protocol and the annexed memorandums of the 7th of October, wherein the whole of the various Belgic debts were stated at 7,800,000 florins—that is, 5,050,000 as half interest of all engagements contracted during the union, 750,000 as being the whole interest of the debt called Austro-Belge, and lastly, 2,000,000 as the total interests of the burdens incurred by Belgium during her incorporation with France. But in consideration of the advantages of commerce and navigation which Holland engaged to allow to Belgium, and in return for the sacrifices imposed on the Dutch by the separation, a further sum of 600,000 florins was added, so as to swell the total of annual interests to 8,400,000. It is incontestable that this additional sum was proposed by the Conference and accepted by Belgium as an equivalent for the freedom of navigation and transit; that it formed no part of any anterior obligation, and that it was to be an eventual sacrifice in return for a definite good. Holland had therefore no claim to impose further exactions or restrictions; for Belgium never would have consented to the payment of this sum had she supposed that the Dutch government would have attempted to obstruct the navigation of the Scheldt, or the transit into Germany. Besides, as was justly observed by the plenipotentiaries, “this demand plainly indicated the intention of the Netherlands court to obtain such financial advantages as would enable it to postpone a final arrangement to an indefinite period.” It might have been added, that it would have been an act of flagrant injustice and contradiction, to have allowed Holland to avail itself of one clause of a treaty essentially favourable to itself, whilst it repudiated the remaining articles—indeed, the whole treaty—as being too advantageous to Belgium.

The note of the 14th of February produced a retort from Mr. Van Zuylen van Nyevelt on the 26th. After denouncing the coercive measures as the introduction of "an unprecedented and arbitrary act of international police, and as a system of hostilities, undertaken in the midst of peace, that tended to undermine the basis of the independence of states, to subvert the fundamental principle of the rights of nations, and to substitute the supremacy of force for that of equity," the Dutch plenipotentiary nevertheless proposed to enter into a convention for the mutual cessation of the blockade, and the restoration of the prisoners. But the uncompromising and acrimonious tone assumed by Baron Van Zuylen, both upon this and other previous occasions, having given umbrage in London, his recall was demanded, and the negotiations were again interrupted until the arrival of Mr. Dedel, who, on the 23rd of March, presented a new project of convention to Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand.

It would be superfluous to analyze the various notes and propositions that were as pertinaciously put forward and skilfully defended by one party, as they were steadily and logically repelled by the other, until at length, on the 16th of May, the Dutch government, wearied with the effect of the coercive measures, instructed its plenipotentiary to propose that "so long as the relations between Holland and Belgium should not be regulated by a definitive treaty, his Netherlands majesty engaged not to renew hostilities against Belgium, and that the navigation of the Scheldt should remain free." This proposition, the only one that offered a prospect of approachment, and which, if adhered to, enabled both countries to effect the reduction of their burdensome war establishments, not only relieved France and England from some portion of their

embarrassment, but opened the door to more direct conclusions. It was the forerunner of the convention of the 21st of May, and paved the way to the reunion of the Conference.

By this convention, accepted by Belgium on the 10th of June, the territorial question was left in *statu quo*, or placed rather upon the basis of *uti possidetis* until the conclusion of a definite treaty. The cessation of hostilities was extended to Luxembourg, which had not been included in any former armistice. The liberty of the Scheldt was restored to its previous footing—maritime coercion was reciprocally discontinued—the prisoners were set at liberty—the Meuse was re-opened to commerce—the communications between Maestricht and North Brabant, as well as with Aix-la-Chapelle, were declared to be free, and the courts of St. James's and the Tuileries engaged to occupy themselves forthwith with a conclusive treaty, and to invite Russia, Austria, and Prussia to unite with them in effecting this object.

Such was the essence of the convention of May, which placed Belgium in a position from which she derived greater benefits than could perhaps result from a definite solution. For, whilst she reaped all the advantages emanating from the November treaty without incurring any of its penalties, Holland was saddled with its territorial and financial drawbacks, and had nothing to show in return but the useless forts of Lillo and Liefkenshoek, and the empty honour of maintaining principles, to which she had sacrificed solid facts.

In virtue of the engagement alluded to in the convention of May, the Conference re-assembled in July. In order, however, to simplify its labours, and to avoid adding to the multitudinous protocols, whose very designation had become an object of European disfavour, it was resolved that the negotiations should, as far as

possible, be conducted verbally ; that the parties directly interested should be admitted to plead, but not to participate in the deliberations ; that the treaty of November, which had become the palladium, and, as it were, a part and parcel of the Belgian constitution, should be taken as the index of negotiation, and be subject only to such modifications as might result from the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian reserves, or as might be necessary to elucidate such crudities as obscured its context and impeded its accomplishment. The Conference consequently continued its labours from the 15th of July until the middle of September, and this with every hope of success. Already nineteen out of the twenty-four articles had been mutually agreed to by the Dutch and Belgian plenipotentiaries ; but the ninth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth sections gave rise to such inveterate discussions, as baffled all adjustment ; the negotiations were, therefore, again interrupted, the Conference was finally dissolved, and the question fell into that state of somnolent abeyance in which it has continued to the present hour.

The motives that actuated the plenipotentiaries in breaking off the negotiations, and the dissatisfaction entertained by them at the conduct of the Dutch government, were consigned in a confidential memorandum. This document having been founded upon the observations of the Belgic plenipotentiaries addressed to the Conference upon the 30th of September, the latter may be considered as faithfully resuming the causes that led to the rupture. By this it appeared, that at the moment the Conference supposed itself on the eve of attaining a solution, new and insuperable difficulties were started by the Hague cabinet, which not only eluded all mention of its efforts to obtain the agreement of the agnates of the house of Nassau and confederation,

as to the application of the stipulations contained in the different articles of the November treaty, which agreement was an indispensable preliminary to all further negotiation, but it declared that matters were not sufficiently mature to warrant such exertion; and, in fact, that it intended to render this step subordinate to ulterior negotiation, and to adopt it at such time only as might suit its own interests and convenience, or, in other words, that it arrogated to itself the power of neutralizing the negotiations by the absence of that consent which it knew was essential to the adjustment of the points in dispute. This being the case, and the Conference having also discovered that the Hague cabinet had hitherto neglected to furnish full powers to its plenipotentiaries to come to any definite agreement, although they had gone through the delusive ceremony of countersigning the nineteen articles above alluded to, and being finally convinced that there existed no real disposition on the part of Holland to conclude a final treaty, ulterior progress was pronounced impossible, and, as aforesaid, the Conference declined all further interference.

Whilst the five courts had been thus occupied in endeavouring to effect the desired solution, a private, collateral negotiation, tending to complete the provisions of the convention of May, was being directly carried on between the Duke of Saxe Weimar on the part of Holland, and by General Baron Hurel on that of Belgium.\* This negotiation, which terminated in the military convention of Zonhoven, was ratified on the 25th of November.† By this the Dutch obtained a right of

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\* The French major-general, Baron Hurel, succeeded General Desprez as chief of the Belgic staff (*chef de l'état major*).

† A small town of the province of Limbourg to the north of Hasselt, where the subordinate commissioners met to discuss the con-

passage for their troops and convoys to and from North Brabant and Maestricht, by the route to Lanaken, Bree, and Valkenswaard, and between Maestricht and Aix-la-Chapelle, by that of Galoppe. At the same time, the navigation of the Meuse, through Maestricht, was declared to be re-opened under certain trifling restrictions, which General Dibbets considered essential for the security of that fortress \* Here the curtain may be said to have fallen upon the negotiations. Henceforth the task of diplomacy was reduced to insignificance, and a veil of inaction spread itself over the whole question, which, so far, terminated without a single concession or admission on the part of Holland, that had not resulted from force, and which, although no synallagmatic contract had been concluded, placed Belgium under the guarantee of an accomplished fact, and under the empire of circumstances ; whence there could be no retrocession without a violation of solemn engagements, nor any material deviation without entailing the curse of general war.

The various impulses that influenced the litigating and arbitrating powers during the course of these long and intricate negotiations, having been developed at some length, nothing remains but to offer a few observations upon the general aspect of the question. These may be speedily resumed.

It has been already shown that a series of impolitic errors, no ways analogous with the alleged wisdom and justice of the Netherlands monarch, or the reputed abilities of his advisers, gave birth to seditious discontents in Belgium, and produced the Brussels re-

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ditions, the principal feature of which was, that the force of each detachment should be limited to 800 men per day, with twenty-four hours' notice when the number exceeded twelve.

\* Declaration of General Dibbets, 10th of November, 1833.

bellion of August. A fatal perseverance in these errors, together with a combination of untoward events, quickly converted this partial outbreaking into general revolution, and led to the dissolution of that inauspicious union, whose heterogeneous elements rendered all possibility of fusion impossible. In despite of its acknowledged and natural sympathy for an old ally, and in defiance of its admitted aversion to give further countenance to that right of insurrection, which it had sanctified by recognizing the July revolution, the Wellington administration of 1830 found itself no more able to oppose the torrent of events in the Netherlands, than it had been to resist those of Paris. It therefore rejected the urgent solicitation of the Dutch government to interfere by force of arms,\* and holding the dynastic interests of Holland as subordinate to the maintenance of European peace, wisely, though reluctantly, resolved to pursue that system of negotiation, of which the protocols of the 4th and 17th of November, 1830, were the first fruits. The pacific principles laid down by the Duke of Wellington having been matured by Lord Grey, and adhered to by Louis Philippe and the great powers, eventually led to the elevation of King Leopold and the treaty of November. Thus Belgium, who already enjoyed *de facto* independence, obtained that *de jure* nationality, which was not only consecrated by a solemn treaty, but consolidated by the presence of envoys from all the contracting powers, except Russia. For, by a singular species of ambi-dextrous policy, Austria and Prussia sent their representatives to Brussels as individual powers, whilst they refused all recognition of King Leopold, as members of that federal union, whose minor elements are dependant on their bidding.

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\* Note of Baron Falck to Lord Aberdeen, 5th of October, 1830, and Lord Aberdeen's reply of the 17th of October.



Admitted as co-equal members of the great European and transatlantic family—entrenched behind the treaty of November—flanked by the conventions of May and Zonhoven—not less confident in the good faith of the guaranteeing powers than in her superior force, her improving credit, and virgin resources—encouraged by a conviction that external convulsion, or the most egregious internal mismanagement, could alone endanger her nationality, Belgium determined to meet the unbending tenacity with which Holland supported assumed principles, by an equally uncompromising adhesion to ratified facts.

Although the state of *uti possidetis* was not of her seeking, her government resolved on clinging to it until it should be replaced by a definite treaty, and to reject every effort to seduce her into any intermediary position. It was, consequently, declared, that the *sine quâ non* of further negotiation must be the adhesion of the agnates of the house of Nassau and the confederation to the projected territorial arrangements, and that until this adhesion should be forthcoming, the subject was not susceptible of advance or retrocession.

In the determination of Belgium not to swerve from this line of policy, and in the reluctance of the king, grand-duke, his agnates, and the confederation to consent to the principle of territorial exchange, reside the whole difficulty of solution. The principles that actuated Belgium have been explained—to her it is a question of life and death. Those that influenced the Dutch monarch are so strictly interwoven with his undisguised aversion to renounce other collateral pretensions, as neither to excite surprise or require explanation. But the objections of his agnates and the Germanic Diet—if, indeed, these objections be other than a mere pretext for supporting the ulterior views of Holland—

are less easily accounted for, since the exchange offered to the two latter is not only based on conditions of perfect equity, but is in no way calculated to prejudice their individual or federal rights ; the former of which may be considered as essentially financial ; the latter, as exclusively military.

In the first place, as regards the agnates of the house of Nassau, whose contingent interests are as remote as would be those of Ducal Brunswick, in any matter concerning the territorial arrangements of Great Britain, it is notorious that the eastern or German half of Luxembourg is more than equivalent, in population and resources, to the four Nassau principalities ceded to Prussia in 1815, and that the half of Limbourg made over to Holland is superior in territorial and financial importance to the western or Wallon half of the grand duchy allotted to Belgium. Thus, if the Nassau agnates were two-fold gainers by the abandonment of their hereditary German possessions, it is evident they would reap still further benefits by renouncing the half of their acquired property in Luxembourg, in exchange for that offered them elsewhere.

Secondly, as regards federal Germany, it may be affirmed that, although by ceding half the grand duchy, the confederation may break the continuity of its frontier, from opposite Longwy to Mezieres, a frontier of little military importance, it still retains the fortress of Luxembourg and the key of the great roads that conduct direct from Rhenan Prussia into the heart of France. And whilst its barrier against the latter is no ways enfeebled on the banks of the Semoy and Chiers, it obtains a strong military position upon those of the Meuse ; the left flank supported by Maestricht, the right resting on Venloo, or even on Grave, and the centre upon Ruremonde, which is capable of being converted into a

formidable *tête de pont*. The utility of the western portion of Luxembourg to Germany, in a strategical point of view cannot be compared with that of Limbourg ; for, in the event of aggressive war, the right flank of any French army, destined to operate upon the duchy of Juliers, would advance direct from Givet by Namur and Liege, and not circuitously from Sedan and Longwy by Bouillon and Neufchateau. Thus, whilst the road to Coblenz, by Trêves, would be sheltered by Luxembourg, that to Dusseldorf and Cologne would be protected by the possession of the right bank of the Meuse, which would be converted into a defensive barrier for the Rhenan provinces, in lieu of serving as a point of offensive concentration against them. As concerns the integrality of the federal statutes, it may be observed, that although these statutes forbid the alienation of any portion of territory, in this instance, it is not an alienation, but an exchange ; and of the legality of such negotiations, the recent cession of St. Wendel furnishes a convincing proof.\*

It has been plausibly objected, as regards Belgium, that if the half of Limbourg—the whole of which, excepting the Dutch *enclaves*, is admitted to have formed an integral part of her territory—be more valuable than the half of the grand duchy, which is claimed by the house of Nassau, why does she persist in demanding the exchange? Why is she desirous to sacrifice the better portion, which is incontestibly her own, for the inferior part, to which she is said to have no title? † To this it may be answered,

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\* This small territory, known as the principality of Lichtenberg, was ceded to Prussia by the Grand-Duke of Saxe-Cobourg, on the 23d of September, 1834, for an annuity of 80,000 rix dollars (12,000*l.*). It consists of 11½ miles, and contains 26,000 inhabitants : it is situated about five leagues north of Sarrebruck, in the regency of Trêves.

† It has been previously observed that from the time of Philip the

that the Belgians not only contest the just title of possessive right to Luxembourg, but that the option does not rest with them. For, inasmuch as the avowed object of the treaty of Vienna was to render the military position of the Netherlands kingdom as strong as possible, by bristling her frontiers with fortresses, and by placing her, as it were, astride upon the Meuse, Scheldt Moselle, and Our, so the occult object of the treaty of November, and concurrent negotiations, was to enfeeble the strategical position of Belgium by destroying these fortresses, and by depriving her of the utrilateral advantages of these rivers, so as to reduce her to a situation more accordant with that neutrality which is her destined character; if, indeed, it be ever practicable to realize a project so little accordant with a geographical position which seems to have destined her armies to be the vanguard of those of France or Germany, even as it has hitherto designated her territory as the arena for the first encounter of both.

Such being the case, it is highly questionable whether the demand for the entire cession of Luxembourg, and the retention of the whole of Limbourg, would be attended to; for, by this means, Prussia and Holland would be deprived of their barrier on the Meuse, and the Belgians would be brought into contact, not only with the most vulnerable part of Holland, by Grave and Nymegen, but would reach within two marches of the Rhine. But were it otherwise, France is herself interested in the maintenance of the proposed arrangement; for although the possession of the western half

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Good, in 1460, down to the treaty of Vienna, in 1815, Luxembourg was invariably looked upon as forming an integral part of the Belgic provinces. It was so considered upon the incorporation of Belgium with France in 1795, and this interpretation was sanctioned by the treaties of Luneville and Campo Formio.

of Luxembourg may be deemed more important to the Germanic Diet than the right bank of the Meuse, it is evidently advantageous for France that Belgium should obtain as much as possible of the former, by which her own frontier contiguity to the Confederation is diminished by about fifteen leagues, and her connexity with a friendly power increased in a similar ratio.

Such is the outline of the diplomatic question. A brief space must now be devoted to describe the immediate results to Belgium of the change in her political position.

“The causes and motives of sedition are innovations in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers; and, in short, whatever in offending people fanneth and knitteth them in one common cause.”\* Had this definition been expressly written for Belgium, it could not have been more apposite. For the grievances complained of by the southern provinces not only embraced all these innovations, but were of such nature as finally united men of adverse doctrines in the same bond, and drove them to seek by violence that just and fair administration of the laws which had hitherto been denied to their petitions. A short but fierce struggle ensued: embittered by all the rancour of individual and national prejudices, and darkened by more than one of those acts of frenzied and unpardonable violence that are the too frequent concomitants of popular convulsion. The people triumphed, and their unlooked-for victory solved the first portion of the insurrectionary problem—that is, the abolition of grievances. But the second—namely, that of financial and commercial amendment, which is solely dependent

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\* Bacon's Essays.

upon time and judicious administration—still remains undefined.

With the independence and nationality they so long thirsted for, the Belgians have obtained a constitution so eminently liberal as to require modification rather than enlargement, at least as regards the executive. They have re-established trial by jury, extended the law of representation as relates to the commons, and circumscribed it as affects the aristocracy. They have removed all restrictions upon the liberty of the press, upon education, upon the publicity of judicial proceedings, and upon the right of association for political, literary, or commercial purposes. Important reforms have taken place in the administration of justice, in prison discipline, in the mode of collecting taxes, and in the municipal and parochial laws. A revised penal code, purporting to restrict capital punishment to fourteen cases, and to abolish branding and the pillory, is forthcoming.\* New canals and roads have been opened, and others are projected. A railway from the sea to the Prussian frontier is steadily advancing, and cross-posts have multiplied the means of internal communication. Saving banks have received an immense extension, having augmented their deposits from 200,000 francs to 18,000,000. Two new universities have been founded ; and the number of persons attending primary schools has increased nearly one-sixth. The unconstitutional and mysterious syndicate has disappeared. Decennial budgets have been replaced by annual estimates. A severe economy and careful watchfulness have been introduced into every department of public expenditure, not a single item of which can now escape legislative scrutiny, or be diverted

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\* Mr. Lebeau, the projector of this amended code, purposes to modify 170, and to repeal 20 articles of the existing penal statutes.

from its destined usage. Civil and military employments are the exclusive property of the natives.\* Lotteries have ceased to exist. Various imposts, alike obnoxious from their nature and amount, have been modified or entirely abrogated: fiscal vexations have been softened; and public credit—that unerring criterion of national vigour and resources—has risen nearly to a level with that of the most favoured nations.

On the other hand, although the clothiers, armourers, colliers, iron-workers, sugar-refiners, soap-boilers, and distillers, are actively employed; and although the customs' receipts of Antwerp and Ostend, for 1834, show an increase of 459,000 francs over those of 1829, it is admitted that colonial commerce is reduced to comparative insignificance—that the imports exceed the exports by nearly 4,000,000—that some branches of industry, especially the cotton trade, are in a languishing state;† that several great mercantile houses and ship-owners, who trafficked with the Indies, have removed from Bruges and Antwerp to Holland; that, with abundance of specie, there is a want of lucrative employment for capital; that the average shipping returns of the out-ports, for 1833-1834, fall short by many tons, compared

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\* Out of 2768 officers only 128 are foreigners, and the services of these are limited to the duration of the war. Before the revolution the numbers of officers was 2,373, of whom only 417 were Belgians. Baron de Keverberg, in his "*Royaume des Pays-Bas*," states the number of Belgians to have exceeded 500; but this still leaves the proportion at nearly 5 to 1.

† The cotton manufactories introduced under the empire owed their prosperity, first, to the continental system; and, secondly, to the assistance of the million of industry. This prosperity may, therefore, be said to have been in a great measure artificial. In a former note the number of individuals employed in the cotton trade was stated at 250,000: this was an error—the total, *including their families*, does not exceed 220,000. The average wages are one franc per day.

with those of 1829 ; that general crime has increased ;\* that the number of indigent has augmented ; and, finally, on comparing the budgets for the last six years, it appears that no direct alleviation has taken place, notwithstanding the abolition of taxes above mentioned.†

It is proper to observe, however, that these unfavourable symptoms are the inevitable consequence of past and existing circumstances. For, although the expenditure of blood and treasure has been proportionately trifling, it is not to be supposed that the Belgians have been enabled to emerge from a state of vassalage into one of almost unlimited freedom, without considerable temporary sacrifices, or that the first fruits of the transition should realize the general vow. Thus, notwithstanding an addition of 20 per cent. upon certain items of public revenue, and notwithstanding that the receipts have constantly surpassed the estimates, the ways and means of the four first years were totally inadequate to meet the extraordinary exigencies of the crisis. Loans to the amount of 116 millions, including 15 millions francs exchequer bills, were therefore necessary ;‡ the interests of which, added to the 8,400,000

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\* It is proved by the interesting work of M. E. Ducpetiaux (*Justice Social*), that capital crime has decreased, the total condemnations from 1830 to 1834 inclusive being 58, of these only one has been executed.

Francs.

† Budgets in 1830.....	84,000,000 (portion of Belgium.)
1831.....	112,000,000
1832.....	203,000,000
1833.....	119,000,000
1834.....	84,000,000
1835.....	92,000,000, of which 295,000,000

have been absorbed by the war department since the 1st of January, 1831.

‡ Loans raised by Belgium and Holland since the revolution : *Holland*.—Total 518,000,000 francs ; of these 119,000,000 have been reimbursed, leaving 399,000,000. *Belgium*.—Total 162,000,000 ; of



florins (17,777,760 francs), and arrears eventually to be paid to Holland, will swell the gross amount of public debt to 25,775,760 francs, a sum nearly equal to the 26 millions formerly paid by Belgium as her portion of the united dead weight. However, as in the event of peace, the army may be diminished to nearly a third of its present numerical strength, which is fixed at 110,000 available militia, exclusive of civic guards, and as the war estimates have constantly absorbed half the general budgets, important reductions will be feasible: so that the ways and means ought not to exceed 75,000,000. Consequently, there will be a direct annual relief to the nation of nearly 11,000,000, when compared with its contributions during its union with Holland.

In presenting this cursory sketch of the actual condition of Belgium, it is not intended to penetrate deeper into futurity, or to hazard speculations, the development of which is solely contingent on the action of time and the favourable junction of external with internal impulses. For it would be as hazardous to prescribe a remedy for the languor that affects commerce, as it would be to specify the benefits that may arise from the completion of the national undertaking, destined to unite the Scheldt with the Rhine.\* Suffice it to say, that the Belgians are without apprehension as to the

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these, 46,000,000 have reimbursed; remain 116,000,000. The total war expenses of Holland for the five last years are estimated at 346,000,000 francs. The public debt of Belgium, as voted for 1835, exclusive of the pension list, &c., amounted to 7,798,000 francs; the total to 11,640,883 francs.

\* The Belgic railway, commencing at Antwerp, with embranchments to Brussels and Ostend, will traverse Malines, Louvain, Tirlemont, Liege, and Verviers, and enter Prussia in the vicinity of Eupen (a manufacturing town five leagues south of Aix-la-Chapelle); whence it will proceed in nearly a direct line by Bergheim to Cologne. The expense of construction averages about £720 per mile (English). The mean speed is calculated at nine miles per hour.

ultimate recovery of the former, and that they look forward with sanguine expectations to the success of the latter, which, it is calculated, will give to Antwerp a decided superiority over her Dutch rivals, by destroying the transport monopoly hitherto enjoyed by them from the absence of competition, and from the want of more rapid and economical communications between Cologne and the sea. This anticipation seems to be well-founded. For it stands to reason, if the German merchants and manufacturers, especially those of the Rhine and its tributaries, can import or export their goods more cheaply and speedily by land than by water, and this without interruption from the seasons, that they will not hesitate between the two modes of conveyance.\* The question that merits the most serious attention of Belgian political economists is not so much, however, whether their commerce will revive, or the railroad succeed ; but whether it be more advantageous to extend their political and commercial relations with France, and almost exclusively look to that country for support ; or whether they should gradually wean themselves from French ascendancy, and endeavour to unite more closely with Germany.

Without pretending to enter into details, it may be affirmed, that whilst the political and moral sympathies of Belgium attract her towards France, her material interests seem to incline her towards Germany. For, on the one hand, however intimate her alliance with the former may be, it is fallacious to suppose that the French government will ever accord any important com-

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\* The importations into Germany from Holland by the Rhine amounted in 1834 to 86,500 ; the exportations by the same channel, to 248,131 tons, at an average cost of about 3s. 6d. per cwt., demanding an average of eight days to Cologne. The calculated expenses by the railway will be about 3s. per cwt., requiring twenty-four hours for goods.

mercial concessions to a nation, which, from the abundance and cheapness of its mineral productions, from its superiority in machinery, from its equal facility of procuring raw materials, from its immediate vicinity, and from various other favourable causes, would not only be enabled to compete with, but to undersell the French manufacturers in their own market, were the prohibition removed, or the protecting duties sensibly diminished. On the other hand, although similar objections may be started by some parts of Germany, it is the evident interest of the majority of states, that are enveloped in the Prussian customs association, to admit Belgian manufactures under a mutually modified tariff, not only in order to excite competition, which is the mother of invention and economy, but that they may obtain readier issues for their own wools, wines, and other articles of indigenous produce.

Whatever may be the opinions of the Belgian legislature upon this question, it will surely be admitted by the statesmen of England and Germany, that, as the peculiar position of Belgium tends to submit her to the constant action of foreign influences, it is sound policy to abstract her as much as possible from those of France. This can only be effected by liberal concessions, and by amicable and protecting ties. It is obvious that the greater the causes for Belgic estrangement from Germany, the greater will be her inclination to draw towards France; whereas, if she be strengthened, encouraged, enriched, and, above all, if her material interests be ameliorated by a connexion with Germany, there can be no doubt that, in case of emergency, she would as readily cleave to the north as she now clings to the south. For the sympathies of nations, like those of individuals, are subordinate to self-interest and self-preservation.

It is of trite occurrence to hear the Belgians accused of an exclusive bias towards France ; and to a certain degree this imputation is not unfounded. But admitting that it were true to the extent generally asserted, what would be more natural ? Independent of an affinity of language, religion, jurisprudence, civil and military organization, literature, tastes and usages : independent of public ties and private connexions, of geographical contiguity and divers other causes tending to promote international affections ; the Belgians are aware that they are mainly indebted to the amity of France, and the prudent moderation of Louis Philippe, for their present existence as a nation. Not only did that monarch reject the offers of a re-union pressed upon him by some of those who first seized the reins of revolutionary government at Brussels, but, rising above the allurements of family aggrandizement, he refused the throne for his son ; because acceptance would have entailed war and the destruction of Belgic nationality—whilst, with an equal regard to the welfare of the people who courted his alliance, he readily accorded them his daughter, that she might not only act as a bond of amity between the two countries, but as the co-founder of an indigenous dynasty. Not content with lending the immense weight of its assistance to Belgium in the cabinet, France has been equally prompt in stretching forth her protecting arm to her in the field. Twice her armies entered the country, for purposes of rescue or support, and having accomplished their mission, again withdrew ; taking upon themselves all the risks and expenses of the two expeditions, without other recompence than that of acquiring fresh titles to the confidence of Europe, and to the thankfulness of the people, whom they had gratuitously succoured.

This amicable proceeding was calculated to effect a

still deeper impression upon the minds of the Belgians, when contrasted with that of the trans-Rhenan states ; which, without being overtly hostile, was of a character essentially adapted to augment the very influence that has furnished matter for so much jealous objurgation. If the operation of this influence be an evil, if its counteraction be a matter of political importance, the remedy is at hand. Let the Germanic Confederation come forward. Let it abandon the mysterious and equivocal line of policy it has hitherto pursued, and whilst it turns a watchful eye to its own interests, as well as to the just claims of the house of Nassau, let it frankly contribute in consolidating that independence, upon which the force of events, rather than the vigour of man, has set its seal. The impolicy of the Dutch government hastened the downfall of that barrier, which, during fifteen years, was regarded as a master-piece of excellence. If a substitute be necessary, the way to upraise it is not by enfeebling the resources, or by casting discredit upon those on whom depends its reconstruction and guardianship ; and yet such appears to have been the system hitherto embraced by the Germanic Diet.\*

But it is time to bring our imperfect labours to a close. This cannot perhaps be accomplished in more just or appropriate terms than by stating that Belgium, prospering beneath the influence of regenerated monarchical institutions, and the paternal sceptre of a prince who generously associated himself with her destinies, and

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\* We may here quote a remarkable authority in support of our opinion, and this no other than the Prince of Orange himself, who, in his manifest of 11th of January (see Appendix, No. 27), thus expressed himself. "I rely with confidence upon the assistance of the great powers, whose whole views are directed towards the maintenance of the equilibrium of Europe and the preservation of general peace. *To render Belgium independent, strong, and happy, ought to be their common interest. Upon that essentially depends universal security.*"

exposed his life for her independence, may now boast that the sum of her liberties is complete, and that, whilst commerce and industry only require peace and equitable treaties to restore them to wholesome vigour, the arts and sciences are advancing in a manner not unworthy of their pristine reputation. A progress, that must be principally ascribed to her political emancipation, and to the expanding consciousness of that freedom which is so essential to the development of individual or national resources.

Enchained during a long lapse of years beneath the iron rule of various masters, the Belgians had lost the title, but not the sentiment of nationality. The irresistible outbreaking of the one has obtained for them the enjoyment of the other; and this, under a wise and tolerant sovereign, who not only reigns amongst, but exclusively for them. They may now, therefore, invoke the evidence of ancient times, and dwell with pride upon the memory of those illustrious countrymen, whose names are interwoven with the pages of European history. They may now renew the broken links of national traditions, and shew that they are not without honourable records of the past, nor undeserving of brighter prospects for the future.

And what country has a better claim to retrospect than that which, as early as the fifteenth century, was pre-eminent throughout Europe for its wealth, industry, civilization and learning?—than that which furnished Charles V. with many of his ablest generals and most valiant soldiers?—than that where Egmont, Horne, and other noble victims fell martyrs to the cause of liberty?—the land that was the birth-place of Scaliger, Ortelius, Lipsius, Van Eyck, and Rubens?—the land that nobly struggled for its rights and privileges against the persecutions of Spain, and resisted the encroachments of

Austria with equal courage, though perhaps with less justice, than she successfully emancipated herself from the thralldom of Holland?

Content with the luxuriant richness of her soil, and the many natural benefits that Providence has conferred upon her; essentially industrious in her habits, and moral in her disposition; desirous to encircle her territory with a fence of olive rather than with a barrier of steel, that land now craves no other boon of Europe than the unobstructed enjoyment of her independence, upon terms compatible with her own vitality and the collateral rights of other states. Policy and justice demand the accordance of this concession. Should it be denied, or should any attempt be made to violate her nationality, Belgium will be as ready to court the hazards of war as she is now anxious to cherish the blessings of peace. She will then be as willing to expend her blood and treasure in defending rational liberty against the infringements of despotism, as she is now eager to co-operate with moderate governments in stemming the progress of irrational licence.

Having reconquered that rank amidst nations which is her just heritage, the ardent vow of Belgium is not to disturb European institutions, but to accommodate herself to them. Passive, but fully armed—patient, but resolute, she is prepared to encounter any political vicissitudes that may assail her from abroad; whilst, with increasing powers and a prospect of diminished burdens, she tranquilly pursues the work of amelioration at home, and devotes herself to the cultivation of those generous and useful arts that are the glory of all civilized nations.





## A P P E N D I X.

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### No. 18.—GENERAL ORDER.

INHABITANTS OF BRUGES!—Public peace has been compromised: the people, usually well disposed, have been instigated to commit excesses. Apprized of the disorders that have disturbed the town of Bruges, General Duvivier, military governor of the two Flanders, has confided to me the honourable mission of re-establishing tranquillity. Inhabitants of Bruges! I will prove myself worthy of his confidence, and hope that at my voice the people will acknowledge its duty, and the workmen return to their labours. I am entrusted with extensive powers, and am determined to employ them in saving Bruges from anarchy. I, and the troops that I have the honour to command, succeeded in re-establishing and maintaining tranquillity at Ghent, even under the fire of the Dutch guns: we are resolved to fulfil our duty in the same manner at this place. *There can be no liberty without independence, no independence without public order.*

(Signed) DE PONTÉCOULANT.

Head-quarters, Bruges.

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### No. 19.—DECREE OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

THE provisional government, considering that it is necessary to fix the future condition of Belgium, decrees:—1st. The Belgic provinces, detached by force from Holland, shall form an *independent state*. 2d. The central committee will occupy itself with the project of a constitution. 3d. The national congress, wherein the interests of all the provinces will be respected, will be convoked. It will examine the project for a constitution, will

modify it as far as may be deemed proper, and will order its establishment throughout Belgium as the definitive constitution.

(Signed) DE POTTER, &c. &c.

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No. 20.—ROYAL DECREE. (EXTRACT.)

WE, William, &c. &c.—Considering that, in the actual situation of the southern provinces, the action of government over such parts of these provinces where order and tranquillity have been hitherto maintained, cannot be exercised without difficulty at the Hague; desiring to remedy this inconvenience, &c. &c., decree:—Art. 1. Our well-beloved son, the Prince of Orange, is charged in our name with the temporary government of all those parts of the southern provinces where legal authority is still recognized. 2. He will fix his residence at Antwerp. 3. He will second and support, as far as possible, by conciliatory means, the efforts of the well-disposed inhabitants to re-establish order, wherever it may be troubled. 4. Our minister of state, the Duke d'Ursel, &c. &c., and our counsellors of state, Baron d'Anethan, &c. &c., are directed to follow our well-beloved son, the Prince of Orange, to Antwerp.

(Signed) WILLIAM.

Given at the Hague, this 4th October, 1830.

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No. 21.—PROCLAMATION.

WE, William, Prince, &c. &c.—To the inhabitants of the southern provinces of the Netherlands kingdom.—Charged for the time being by the king, our august father, with the government of the southern provinces, we return amongst you in the hope of contributing to the re-establishment of order, and the happiness of the country. Our heart bleeds at the ills you have endured. Seconded by the efforts of all good citizens, we trust that we may anticipate the calamities that still menace you! Upon quitting you, we conveyed to the foot of the throne the vows expressed by many of you, that a separation should take place between the two portions of the kingdom, to remain united, however, beneath the same sceptre. This demand has been accepted; but, as inevitable delays must arise before the mode and conditions of this important measure can be determined in the proper constitutional forms, his majesty has accorded to

the southern provinces a distinct administration, of which I am the chief, and which will be composed entirely of Belgians. Affairs will be discussed both by public and private individuals, in the language of their choice. All places dependant on this government will be given to the inhabitants of the provinces that compose it. The utmost liberty will be left to the instruction of youth. Other ameliorations will accord with the vows of the nation, and the exigencies of the times. Compatriots! we only demand of you to unite your efforts with ours, in order to realize all our hopes. From that moment we guarantee the *oblivion of all political faults* antecedent to the present proclamation. For the better attainment of the proposed object, we will invoke every means of enlightening ourselves; we will anticipate every useful counsel. We will surround ourselves with such notable inhabitants as are most distinguished for their patriotism. Let all those that are animated by the same sentiments approach us with confidence! Belgians! it is by these means that we hope to concur with you in saving the beautiful country that is so dear to us!

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Antwerp, 5th October, 1830.

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No. 22.—ROYAL PROCLAMATION. (EXTRACT.)

WE, William, &c. &c.—Dutchmen! faithful to our constitutional oath, and to the obligations that we were bound to fulfil in regard to our subjects, we have vainly employed every possible means of appeasing the armed revolt that has taken place in the southern provinces. Events that have arisen with overwhelming rapidity having rendered it impossible to protect the faithful inhabitants of these provinces against superior force, we feel that it is essential to occupy ourselves solely with the welfare of that part of our kingdom, whose fidelity to our house and well-organized social institutions has manifested itself in a positive manner. You see with what promptitude terrible disasters have been produced, by the conduct of a multitude worthy of pity. Your prudence and fidelity to your duties, your attachment to order, and, above all, your faith in God, the avenger of injustice, has prevented your being borne away by the torrent. The maintenance of that liberty which the Netherlands have enjoyed during centuries, would otherwise, perhaps, be for ever impos-

sible, and your destruction certain. Inhabitants of our faithful countries! all your strength is necessary at this moment for the protection of your native land. The situation of the kingdom demands that a general armament should forthwith take place, and that your energies should be exerted to preserve all that is most sacred, most dear to you. The fundamental law prescribes, as a paramount duty under similar circumstances, that the inhabitants of the kingdom should fly *to arms!* This command coincides with your desires. Well, then, Hollanders! to arms! At the pressing call of your sovereign, *to arms!* In defence of order and the laws, *to arms!* Under the protection of Almighty God, who has so often rescued the House of Orange and the Low Countries from the greatest perils, *to arms!* \* \* \* \*

(Signed) WILLIAM.

The Hague, 7th October, 1830.

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#### NO. 23.—PROCLAMATION OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

BELGIANS!—Since I addressed you by proclamation on the 5th instant, I have carefully studied your position. I understand it, and acknowledge you as an independent nation. That is to say, I will not oppose any of your civic rights even in the provinces, where I exercise extensive powers. Choose freely, and by the same method as your countrymen in the other provinces, deputies for the approaching national congress, and proceed there to discuss the interests of your country. I thus place myself in the provinces that I govern at the head of the movement which is to lead towards a new and stable order of things, whose strength will consist in your nationality. This is the language of him who shed his blood for the independence of your soil, and who desires to unite his efforts to yours for the establishment of your political nationality.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Antwerp, 16th October, 1830.

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#### NO. 24.—ROYAL MESSAGE TO THE STATES-GENERAL.

NOBLE AND PUISSANT SIRS!—By the proclamation of our well-beloved son, the Prince of Orange, given at Antwerp this 16th instant, *the motives of which are little known to us, though we can*

*appreciate the consequences*, it appears beyond a doubt that all recognition of the constitutional authority has ceased in the southern provinces. In this state of affairs, our whole care must henceforth be exclusively devoted to the faithful northern provinces. Not only shall all our means and energies be exerted in favour of their interests, but all measures of the constitution must likewise concern them. It is in consequence of this principle that all propositions on our part will be proposed and communicated to this assembly; we hope that these interests will be viewed by your high mightinesses in the same light, and that you will consider yourselves from this moment as solely representing the northern provinces, until something definitive shall be determined upon, in accord with our allies, concerning the southern provinces.

(Signed) WILLIAM.

The Hague, 20th October, 1832.

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#### NO. 25.—PROCLAMATION OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

BELGIANS!—I have endeavoured to do you all the good that it was in my power to effect, without being able to attain the noble object towards which tended all my efforts—*the pacification of your beautiful provinces!* You are about to discuss the interests of your country in the approaching national congress. I think that I have fulfilled my duty towards you as far as depended upon me, and believe that I still fulfil a most painful one, in quitting your soil for the purpose of awaiting elsewhere the issue of the political movement in Belgium. But, whether far or near, my vows will be with you, and I shall always endeavour to contribute to your real welfare.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Antwerp, 25th of October, 1833.

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#### NO. 26.—CONVENTION OF ANTWERP.

GENERAL CHASSE consented to an indefinite suspension of arms upon the following conditions:—

- a.*—That all offensive operations should instantly terminate.
- b.*—That no armed individual should show himself upon the esplanade or environs of the citadel.
- c.*—That no act of hostility should be committed against the fleet in the Scheldt.
- d.*—That

the provisions plundered from the stores at Rivoli in defiance of the armistice should be restored, the said armistice having prevented General Chassé from ordering a sortie against the pillagers." These propositions were agreed to in an explanatory convention signed by Baron Chassé and Mr. Chazal, on the 28th of October, by which reciprocity was guaranteed and the environs of the citadel declared to include the esplanade, the whole of the arsenal, and all the exterior of the citadel to the distance of 300 metres (327 yards) from the foot of the glacis, including the lunettes St. Laurent, and Kiel. A further convention to the following effect was concluded at mid-day on the 5th of November. "Affairs shall continue to remain in *statu quo*. The renewal of hostilities shall be announced on either side three days before hand."\*

(Signed) BARON CHASSÉ.

F. CHAZAL.

(Approved) C. ROGIER.

#### No. 27.—MANIFEST OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

BELGIANS!—The recent events in Belgium have entailed upon me, upon my family, and the nation, misfortunes which I shall not cease to deplore. Nevertheless, in the midst of these calamities, I never have renounced the consolatory hope that the time would come when the purity of my intentions would be acknowledged, and when I might personally co-operate in the happy endeavour to calm divisions, and to revive the peace and tranquillity of a country to which I am bound by the sacred ties of duty and the most tender affection. The choice of a sovereign for Belgium has been attended with difficulties that it would be needless to describe. May I, without presumption, believe that my person at present offers the best and most satisfactory solution of these difficulties? The five powers, whose confidence it is so necessary to obtain, after combining their efforts with so much disinterestedness to terminate the evils that oppress us, will doubtless see in this arrangement the surest, most speedy, and easiest means of strengthening internal tranquillity, and of assuring the general peace of Europe. The recent and

\* It was the repeated infraction of this *statu quo* on both sides that gave rise to such constant diplomatic discussions, and often endangered the safety of the city.

many detailed communications received from the principal towns and provinces, offer striking proofs of the confidence which a great portion of the nation still accords to me, and authorizes me to cherish a hope that this sentiment may become unanimous when my views and intentions are sufficiently understood. It is for this motive that I desire to offer an explanation of these intentions and views. The past, as far as I am concerned, shall be devoted to oblivion. I will allow of no personal distinction based upon political acts; and my constant efforts will tend to unite for the service of the state, without exclusion or regard to past conduct, all those men whose talents and experience render them capable of fulfilling public duties. I will devote my most assiduous care to insure to the Catholic church and its ministers the attentive protection of the government, and to surround them with the respect of the nation.\* I shall be ready at the same time to co-operate in all measures that may be necessary to guarantee the perfect freedom of religious worship, so that every one may exercise without restriction that to which he belongs. One of my most earnest desires, as well as one of my first duties, will be to combine my efforts with those of the legislature, in order to complete the arrangements which, founded upon the basis of national independence, will give security to our external relations and contribute to ameliorate and extend our means of prosperity at home. To obtain these grand objects, I rely with confidence on the assistance of the courts, whose whole views are directed towards the preservation of European equilibrium and the maintenance of general peace. To render Belgium independent, strong, and happy ought to be their common interest. Upon that essentially depends universal security. Every thing which tends to adjourn a final arrangement cannot fail to diminish, if not to destroy, the salutary effects; and the more one considers the means of assuring to Belgium, together with the establishment of her independence, the benefits of a long and durable peace, the more one acknowledges the indispensable necessity of measures, which, under existing circumstances, appear the least exposed to increasing difficulties and to the danger of ulterior delay. It is thus, that I place myself before the Belgic people with all the frankness and sincerity reclaimed

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\* The Catholic religion being almost the universal faith of the country, this phrase gave intense offence.

by our mutual position. It is upon the intelligence that guides her in the appreciation of the wants of the country ; it is upon her attachment to liberty that my principal hopes repose. It only remains for me to assure her, that in adopting the present step, I have less consulted my own interest than my lively and invariable desire to see the evils that still afflict Belgium terminated by measures of peace and conciliation.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

London, 11th of January, 1831.

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No. 28.—EXTRACT FROM THE ELEVENTH PROTOCOL,  
20TH JANUARY, TERMED BASIS OF SEPARATION.

Art. I.—THE limits of Holland shall compromise all the territories, fortresses, towns, and places, which belonged to the former republic of the united provinces of the Netherlands in the year 1790.

Art. II.—Belgium shall consist of all the remainder of the territories which received the denomination of the kingdom of the Netherlands in the treaties of the year 1815, except the grand-duchy of Luxembourg, which, being possessed by the princes of the house of Nassau under a different title, forms, and shall continue to form, part of the Germanic Confederation.

Art. III.—It is understood that the arrangements of the Articles from CVIII to CXVII inclusive, of the general act of the congress of Vienna, relative to the free navigation of the navigable rivers, shall be applied to the rivers and streams which traverse the Dutch and Belgian territories.

As it would, nevertheless, result from the basis laid down in articles I and II, that Holland and Belgium would possess detached portions of land within their respective territories, such exchanges and arrangements shall, through the care of the five courts, be effected between the two countries as shall ensure to them, reciprocally, the advantage of an entire contiguity of possession, and of a free communication between the towns and fortresses comprised within their frontiers.

Art. IV.—The preceding articles being agreed upon, the plenipotentiaries directed their attention to the means of consolidating the work of peace, to which the five powers have devoted their lively solicitude, and of placing in their true light the principles which actuate their common policy.



They were unanimously of opinion that the five powers owe to their interest, well understood ; to their union, to the tranquillity of Europe, and to the accomplishment of the views recorded in their protocol of the 20th of December a solemn avowal, and a striking proof of their firm determination not to seek in the arrangements relative to Belgium, under whatever circumstances they may present themselves, any augmentation of territory, any exclusive influence, any isolated advantages ; but to give to that country itself, as well as to all the states which adjoin it, the best guarantees of repose and security. It is in pursuance of these maxims, and with these salutary intentions, that the plenipotentiaries resolved to add to the preceding articles those which follow.

Art. V.—Belgium, within those limits that shall be determined and traced conformably to the arrangements laid down in articles I, II, and IV of the present protocol, shall form a perpetually neutral state. The five powers guarantee to it that perpetual neutrality, as well as the integrity and inviolability of its territory, within the above-mentioned limits.

Art. VI.—By a just reciprocity, Belgium shall be bound to observe the same neutrality towards all other states, and not to make any attempt against their internal or external tranquillity.

Art. VII.—The plenipotentiaries will occupy themselves without delay in deciding upon the general principles of finance, of commerce, and others, which the separation of Belgium from Holland requires.

These principles once agreed upon, the present protocol, thus completed, shall be converted into a definitive treaty, and communicated in that form to all the courts of Europe, with an invitation to them to accede to it.

Art. VIII.—When the arrangements relative to Belgium shall be completed, the five courts reserve to themselves the power of examining, without prejudice to the rights of third parties, the question whether it would be possible to extend to the neighbouring countries the benefit of the neutrality guaranteed to Belgium.

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No. 29.—EXTRACT FROM THE NINETEENTH PROTOCOL, 19TH FEBRUARY.

§ 1. THAT it remains understood, as it has from the beginning, that the arrangements resolved on by the protocol of January 20, 1831, are fundamental and irrevocable.

§ 2. That the independence of Belgium shall only be recognized by the five powers upon the conditions and within the limits which result from the said arrangements of January 20, 1831.

§ 3. That the principle of the neutrality, and the inviolability of the Belgian territory within the above-mentioned limits, remains in full force and obligatory upon the five powers.

§ 4. That the five powers, faithful to their engagements, claim the full right of declaring that the sovereign of Belgium should, by his personal situation, conform to the principles of the existence of Belgium, ensure the safety of other states, accept without restriction, as his majesty the King of the Netherlands did with regard to the protocol of July 21, 1814, all the fundamental arrangements contained in the protocol of January 20, 1831, and be in a situation to secure to the Belgians the peaceable enjoyment thereof.

§ 5. That these first conditions being fulfilled, the five powers will continue to employ their care and their good offices to procure the reciprocal adoption and execution of the other arrangements rendered necessary by the separation of Belgium from Holland.

§ 6. That the five powers admit the right in virtue of which other states may take such measures as they may judge necessary to enforce respect to, or to re-establish their legitimate authority in all the territories belonging to them, to which the protest mentioned above sets up pretensions, and which are situated out of the Belgian territory declared neutral.

§ 7. That his majesty the king of the Netherlands having acceded, without restriction, by the protocol (No. 18) of February 18, 1831, to the arrangements relative to the separation of Belgium from Holland, every enterprise of the Belgian authorities upon the territory which the protocol (No. 11) of January 20 has declared Dutch, will be regarded as a renewal of the struggle to which the five powers have resolved to put an end.

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#### NO. 30.—PROCLAMATION OF THE REGENT OF BELGIUM.

INHABITANTS OF THE PROVINCE OF LUXEMBOURG! FELLOW CITIZENS!—I have sworn to maintain the independence and integrity of the Belgian territory: I shall be faithful to my oath.

Do not suffer yourselves to be seduced by promises or terrified by threats. The Congress has protested against the acts of the Congress at London, which a great power itself considers only as proposals. The nation which has been able to vanquish the

Dutch armies will maintain the protest of its representatives. We began our revolution in spite of the treaties of 1815: we will finish it in spite of the protocols of London.

Luxembourgers! you have been for three centuries Belgians like us, and you have shown yourselves worthy of that name. Ever since the reign of Philip the Good, your efforts, like ours, have had for their object a common nationality.

In 1815 you were for the first time connected with Germany, but you have continued to live under the same institutions as the rest of Belgium.

In our grand duchy, as well as in the other Belgic provinces, King William has broken the social compact which united him to the Belgians, and has released them from their engagements by violating his own. War has decided between him and us: the legitimate authority is that which the national will has founded.

You are not strangers to our combats, to our victories; you have spontaneously associated yourselves with the Belgic revolution, and the names of your volunteers are inscribed in the history of our days.

You already enjoy, as far as circumstances will permit, the benefits of the revolution.

The most odious taxes are abolished.

You have yourselves renewed your communal authorities, and your affairs are administered by men of your own choosing.

Your deputies have concurred in giving to Belgium the constitution which governs it.

You have not forgotten the vexations of which you have been for fifteen years the victims. Dread the return of the Dutch system of taxation, which has ruined your manufactures and your agriculture.

The men who speak to you of legal order, and who excite among you civil war, are the agents, the accomplices of the overthrow of the government: they have lived by all the abuses, and they regret the loss of them.

Reduced to itself, separated from Belgium, France, and Prussia, hemmed in on all sides by lines of custom-houses, your province, by constituting itself apart, would be the most wretched country on earth.

Luxembourgers! remain united and firm. In the name of Belgium, accept the assurance that your brethren will never abandon you.

E. L. SURLET DE CHOKIER,  
The Regent of Belgium.

No. 31.—LETTER OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE  
PRINCE OF SAXE COBURG TO THE REGENT OF  
BELGIUM.

SIR,—It is with sincere satisfaction that I have received the letter, dated the 6th of June, which you have written to me. The circumstances which have delayed my answer are too well known to you to require an explanation.

Whatever may be the result of political events with respect to myself, the flattering confidence which you have placed in me has made it my duty to make every effort in my power to contribute to bring to a happy conclusion a negotiation of such great importance to the existence of Belgium, and perhaps the peace of Europe.

As the form of my acceptance does not permit me to enter into details, I must here add some explanations. As soon as the Congress shall have adopted the articles which the Conference at London proposes to it, I shall consider the difficulties to be removed as far as I am concerned, and I shall be able immediately to proceed to Belgium.

The congress will now be able to embrace at one view the situation of affairs. May its decision complete the independence of the country, and thus furnish me with the means to contribute to its prosperity!

(Signed) LEOPOLD.

London, June 26, 1831.

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No. 32.—LETTER OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE  
LEOPOLD TO THE BELGIAN DEPUTATION.

GENTLEMEN,—I entertain a deep sense of the wish of which the Belgic congress has made you the interpreters.

This mark of confidence is to me the more flattering, since it was not sought for on my part.

Human destinies do not present a more noble and more useful task than that of being called to maintain the independence and consolidate the liberties of a nation. A mission of such high importance can alone determine me to abandon an independent position, and to separate myself from a country to which I have been attached by ties and recollections the most sacred, and which has given me so many proofs of its benevolence and sympathy.

I accept then, Gentlemen, the offer which you make me, it being understood that it will belong to the congress of the national representatives to adopt the measures which can alone constitute the new state, and thus secure for it the recognition of the European powers. It is thus that the Congress will give me the power of devoting myself entirely to Belgium, and of consecrating to its well-being and prosperity the relations which I have formed in countries whose friendship is essential to it, and to secure for it, as much as depends upon my co-operation, an independent and happy existence.

(Signed) LEOPOLD.

June 26, 1831.

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NO. 33.—ARTICLES PROPOSED BY THE CONFERENCE TO BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.—ANNEX A, TO PROTOCOL (26), JUNE 26TH, DESIGNATED THE EIGHTEEN ARTICLES.

Art. I.—THE limits of Holland shall comprise all the territories, fortresses, towns, and places which belonged to the ancient republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands in the year 1790.

Art. II.—Belgium shall consist of all the remainder of the territories which received the denomination of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the treaty of 1815.

Art. III.—The five powers will use their good offices in order that the *status-quo*, in the grand duchy of Luxembourg, shall be maintained during the progress of the separate negotiation, which the Sovereign of Belgium will enter into with the King of the Netherlands and with the Germanic Confederation, on the subject of the said grand duchy,—a negotiation distinct from the question of the limits between Holland and Belgium.

It is understood that the fortress of Luxembourg shall preserve its free communication with Germany.

Art. IV.—If it is proved that the republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands did not exercise the exclusive sovereignty in the town of Maestricht in 1790, the two parties shall consider of the means of coming to some suitable arrangement in this respect.

Art. V.—As it would result from the basis laid down in Articles I and II, that Holland and Belgium would possess detached portions of land within their respective territories there

shall be made between Holland and Belgium such amicable exchanges as shall be thought good for the mutual accommodation of both.

Art. VI.—The mutual evacuation of the territories, towns, and fortresses shall take place independently of the arrangements relative to the exchanges.

Art. VII.—It is understood that the arrangements of the Articles from CVIII to CXVII inclusive, of the General Act of the Congress of Vienna, relative to the free navigation of navigable rivers, shall be applied to those rivers which traverse the Dutch and Belgian territory.

The execution of these stipulations shall be regulated with the least possible delay.

The participation of Belgium in the navigation of the Rhine by the internal channels between that river and the Scheldt, shall form the subject of a separate negotiation between the parties interested ; to which the five powers will lend their good offices.

The use of the canals from Ghent to Terneuse, and of the Zuid-Wilhelm-waart,\* constructed during the existence of the kingdom of the Netherlands, shall be common to the inhabitants of the two countries ; a regulation upon that subject shall be established. The drainage of the waters of the two Flanders shall be regulated in the manner most likely to prevent inundations.

Art. VIII.—For the execution of the preceding Articles I. and II., Dutch and Belgian commissioners of demarcation shall meet, with as little delay as possible, in the town of Maestricht, and shall proceed to mark out the boundaries which are to separate Holland from Belgium, in conformity to the principles established for that purpose in the Articles I and II.

These same commissioners shall be employed on the exchanges to be made by the competent authorities of the two countries, according to Article V.

Art. IX.—Belgium, within the limits such as they shall be traced in conformity with the principles laid down in the present preliminaries, shall form a perpetually neutral state. The five powers, without wishing to interfere in the internal administration of Belgium, guarantee to it that perpetual neutrality, as well as the integrity and inviolability of its territory within the limits mentioned in the present article.

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\* This latter canal connects the Meuse, at Maestricht, with the river Aa at Helmond, in North Brabant.

Art. X.—By a just reciprocity, Belgium shall be bound to observe the same neutrality towards all other states, and not to make any attempt against their internal or external tranquillity ; reserving to itself, however, the right of defending itself against all foreign aggression.

Art. XI.—The port of Antwerp, in conformity with the 15th Article of the Treaty of Paris of May 30th, 1814, shall continue to be solely a port of commerce.

Art. XII.—The division of the debt shall be regulated in such a manner as to allot to each of the two countries the total of the debt which originally, before their union, belonged to the territories of which those countries consist ; and to divide in a just proportion those which have been contracted in common.

Art. XIII.—Commissioners of liquidation, named on either side, shall meet forthwith. The first object of their meeting shall be to fix the proportion which Belgium shall have to pay provisionally, and subject to a final settlement, for the discharge of a portion of the interest of the debt mentioned in the preceding article.

Art. XIV.—The prisoners of war shall be restored on both sides, fifteen days after the adoption of these articles.

Art. XV.—The sequestrations imposed on private property, in both countries, shall be immediately taken off.

Art. XVI.—No inhabitant of the fortresses, towns, and territories reciprocally evacuated, shall be molested or disturbed for his past political conduct.

Art. XVII.—The five powers reserve to themselves the faculty of using their good offices whenever they may be demanded by the parties interested.

Art. XVIII.—These articles reciprocally adopted, shall be converted into a definitive treaty.

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#### No. 34.—PROCLAMATION.\*

BELGIANS!—In taking possession of the throne, to which I was called by the will of the nation, I said, in addressing myself to the representatives of Belgium,—“ If, notwithstanding every sacrifice to maintain peace, we should be threatened with war, I

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\* This document was drawn up by Mr. Nothomb in the king's cabinet, and under the eye of his majesty.

shall not hesitate to appeal to the courage of the Belgian people, and hope that the whole will rally round their chief for the defence of their country and national independence. These words I address to-day to the whole nation.

Without any previous declaration, the enemy has suddenly renewed hostilities. Disregarding both the engagements which result from the suspension of arms, and the principles which regulate civilized people, they have not shrunk from the most odious violation of the rights of nations, thus hoping, by surprising us, to obtain some temporary advantages. They are the same men whom you saw in September—they re-appear in the midst of a peaceable population, preceded by devastation and incendiarism. Strong in the sentiment of our right, we will repulse this unexpected aggression; we will oppose force to force. Once already you have conquered Holland;—you began the revolution by victory—you will consolidate it by victory. You will not be faithless to your glorious recollections. Your enemies await you upon the spot which has already been witness of their defeat. Each of us will do his duty.

Belgian like yourselves, I will defend Belgium.—I depend upon the civic guard, the army, and upon the courage and devotion of all. I go to my post—I await there all Belgians to whom their country, honour, and liberty are dear.

(Signed) LEOPOLD.

(Signed) { COUNT D'HANE.  
{ CHARLES DE BROUCKÈRE.

#### No. 35.—SUBSTANCE OF TWENTY-FOUR ARTICLES.

Art. I.—THE Belgian territory shall be composed of the provinces of South Brabant, East and West Flanders, Liege, Namur, Hainault, Antwerp, and Limbourg, such as they formed part of the united Netherlands kingdom constituted in 1815, excepting those districts of Limbourg designated in Art. IV. The Belgic territory shall, moreover, comprise that part of the grand duchy of Luxembourg specified in Art. II.

Art. II.—His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, &c. &c., consents, that in the grand duchy the limits of the Belgian territory shall be as follows:—Commencing from the frontier of France, between Rodange and Athus, a line shall be drawn which shall leave the road from Longwy to Arlon and Bastogne, Arlon, Mesancy, Heebus, Guirsch, Grende, Nothomb, and



Parette to Belgium ;—Eischen, Oberpalen, Perlé, and Martelange to the grand duchy. Then, following the course of the Sure as far as Tintange, to the frontier of Diekirch, to pass between Surret, Harlange, and Terchamps on the Luxembourg side, Honville, Livarchamp, and Loutremange on that of Belgium. Then having reached the boundary of the arondissement of Diekirch, the said line shall continue to follow that boundary to the Prussian frontier. All territories to the west of this line, to belong to Belgium ; all those on the east, to the grand duchy.\*

Art. III.—In return for these cessions, his Majesty the King of the Netherlands shall receive a territorial indemnity in Luxembourg.

Art. IV.—1st. The old Dutch *enclaves* upon the right bank of the Meuse shall be united to those districts on the same bank which did not belong to the States-General in 1790, so that the whole of the province of Limbourg, between the Meuse to the west, the Prussian frontier to the east, the present frontier of Liege to the south, and Dutch Guelderland to the north, shall henceforth belong to his Majesty the King of the Netherlands, &c. &c.

2d.—A line shall be drawn on the left bank, from the southernmost part of North Brabant to Wessem on the Meuse ; all districts to the north of this line to belong to Holland.

The old Dutch *enclaves* on the left bank shall belong to Belgium, excepting Maestricht, which, together with a radius extending 1200 toises from the outer glacis, shall continue to be possessed by the King of the Netherlands.†

Art. V.—His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, &c. &c. shall come to an agreement with the Germanic Confederation, and agnates of the house of Nassau, as to the application of the stipulations contained in Art. III and IV, &c.

\* The part of Luxembourg retained by Holland, contained, on the 1st of January, 1830—Cantons,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  ; communes,  $115\frac{1}{2}$  ; population, 154,000. The part ceded to Belgium—Cantons,  $18\frac{1}{2}$  ; communes,  $190\frac{1}{2}$  ; population 158,000.

† The Dutch *enclaves* consisted of fifty-four communes, containing 58,861 inhabitants—of these, thirteen were on the left bank. The portion of Limbourg retained by Holland comprises  $13\frac{1}{2}$  cantons, including the fortress of Maestricht,  $123\frac{1}{2}$  communes, and 174,500 inhabitants. The Belgic moiety contains  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cantons,  $188\frac{1}{2}$  communes, and 157,500 souls.

Art. VI.—In consideration of these arrangements, each party for ever renounces all pretensions to the territories &c., situated within the limits of the other, as specified in Art. I, III, and IV. The said limits to be marked by Belgian and Dutch commissioners.

Art. VII.—Belgium within the limits above specified, shall form an independent and perpetual neutral state, and be bound to observe the same neutrality to other states.

Art. VIII.—The drainage of the Flanders waters shall be regulated according to the 6th Art. of the definitive treaty, between the Emperor of Germany and States-General of the 8th of November, 1785.

Art. IX.—The provisions of Art. CVIII to CXVII inclusive, of the Central Act of the Congress of Vienna, relating to the free navigation of rivers, shall be applied to those which separate or traverse Holland and Belgium. The piloting and buoying of the Scheldt shall be subject to the joint superintendence of commissioners appointed on both sides. Moderate pilotage dues shall be fixed by mutual agreement. These dues to be the same for both nations. The intermediate channels between the Scheldt and Rhine, and *vice versâ*, shall be free, and only subject to moderate tolls, to be the same for both countries.

The tariffs of the convention of Mayence of the 31st of March, 1831, to be applied provisionally to the waters separating or traversing the two territories.

Art. X.—The use of the canals traversing both countries to be free and common to the inhabitants, and on equal conditions.

Art. XI.—The commercial communications through Maestricht and Sittard to and from Germany, to be entirely free, and subject only to moderate turnpike tolls for the repairs of the road.

Art. XII.—In the event of a new road or canal being made in Belgium, terminating at the Meuse, opposite Sittard, Belgium shall be entitled to demand of Holland (who shall not refuse) that the said road, &c. shall be continued strictly for commercial purposes, at the cost of Belgium, to the frontier of Germany.\*

Art. XIII.—1st. From and after the 1st of January, 1832, Belgium shall remain charged with 8,400,000 florins of annual interests, the capital to be transferred from the debt of Holland to that of Belgium. 2d. The capitals transferred shall form part of the Belgic national debt, and no distinction shall ever be made by her between this and any other portions of her debt

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\* This difficulty will be obviated by the railway.

already existing, or that may be created hereafter. 3d. The payment of the above sum shall take place regularly every six months, without any deduction whatsoever, present or future. 4th. In consideration of the creation of this sum of annual interests, Belgium shall be liberated from all other obligations to Holland, on account of the division of the public debt. 5th. Commissioners shall be named on both sides to regulate these matters.

Art. XIV.—Holland having, since the 1st of November, 1830, exclusively made all the advances to meet the charge of the whole debt, shall receive five per cent. interest for arrears from that period.

Art. XV.—The port of Antwerp shall continue to be solely a port of commerce, in conformity with the 15th Article of the Treaty of Paris, 1815.

Art. XVI.—Works of public or private utility shall belong to the country in which they are situated, and no claim shall be raised in regard to the expenses of construction.

Art. XVII.—All sequestrations imposed in Belgium on property or hereditary estates, shall be taken off without delay, and the enjoyment thereof restored to their lawful owners.

Art. XVIII.—The inhabitants of both countries shall be allowed two years to transfer their residence, sell, exchange, or remove their property, without hindrance, or the payment of other duties than those in force upon all such changes, &c. The *droits d'aubaine et de détraction* upon persons and property shall be abandoned in both countries.

Art. XIX.—The character of a subject of the two governments, with regard to property, shall be acknowledged and maintained.

Art. XX.—The stipulations of Articles XI to XXI, inclusive of the treaty concluded between Russia and Austria, on the 3d of May, 1815, relating to persons possessing property in both countries, shall be applied to the subjects of Holland or Belgium who may come within the cases therein provided for.

Art. XXI.—No person shall be molested on account of any part which he may have taken in previous political events.

Art. XXII.—The pensions and allowances of unemployed or retired persons, shall be paid on either side conformable to the laws in force previous to the 1st of November, 1830. Those to persons born in Belgium to remain to the charge of the Belgian treasury ; those born in Holland to the charge of the Dutch.

Art. XXIII.—All claims of Belgic subjects upon private establishments, such as widows' funds, &c., to be examined and determined by the mixed liquidation commission, mentioned in Article XIII.

Art. XXIV.—Immediately after the exchange of ratifications, orders shall be transmitted to the commanders of the respective troops, and civil authorities, to evacuate and deliver over the territories, &c. that change domination.

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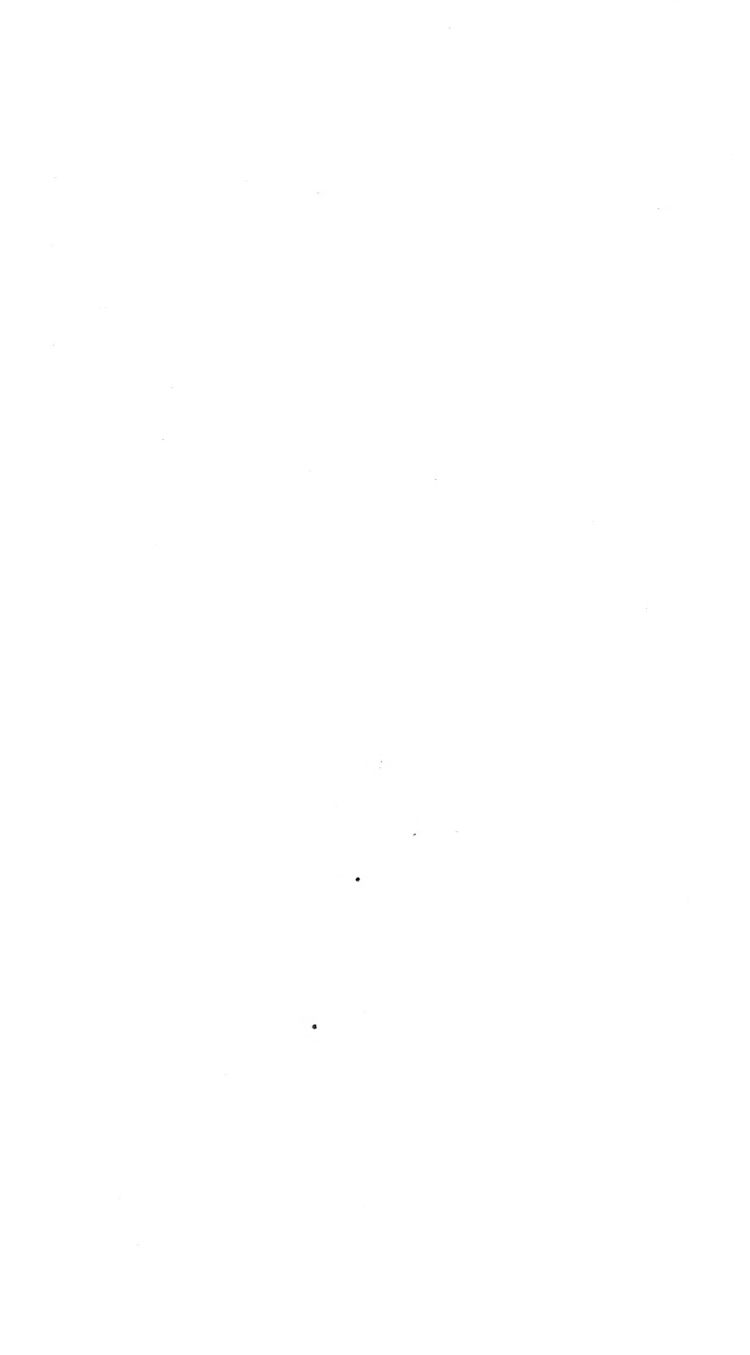
Three explanatory articles, dated the 11th of June, 1832, were added to this treaty.

The 1st recognized the dissolution of the union; the 2nd, the independence and neutrality of Belgium; and the 3d, specified six weeks as the period for ratifying the treaty of the 15th of November.

THE END.







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